aggression; it appears capable of doing so in the future. Where it mattered most the United States maintained an adequate and necessary level of power to underwrite Western security and permit the West's astonishing resiliency to reassert itself. But in Asia the world generally—and Asians particularly—refused to recognize a body of major American interests. This fact focused the nation's maximum commitment of a dozen years at its weakest point and invited repeated defiance of a whole spectrum of clearly-stated national preferences. The threat of violence was not enough. For in the defense of any commitment there must be a clear relationship between the price of destruction and the gains to national security. In the turbulent Afro-Asian world that relationship has proved to be agonizingly elusive.

A Nation Among Nations

Americans discovered early that it was far easier to escape English rule than the pressures of world politics. From the beginning they developed interests that were achievable only through satisfactory relationships with other nations. They required British power to eliminate France from the North American continent; they required French power to establish their independence from England. Even as the Revolutionary leaders exploited Europe's strife to gain their own ends, they accepted isolationism as a powerful determinant in subsequent American policy. For having achieved independence and secured their borders, they had no further need of European might. Moreover, in dealing with countries often in conflict they had geographic advantages worthy of perpetuation. "Why," asked Washington in his Farewell Address, "forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?"

But for the Founding Fathers isolationism was always more than a response to special geographical factors or a thoughtless preoccupation with internal concerns and self-sufficient pursuits. The United States never sought the isolation of such hermit nations as Japan and Korea; from its republican beginnings it created and maintained a commercial empire that blanketed much of the globe. Never for a moment was the United States not an integral part of the world community. American isolationism was always political and military, never commercial or intellectual. In warning the nation against military involvement in European affairs, Federalists and Republicans alike reflected a realistic assessment of European power and the conviction that the country would only waste its energies if it engaged in struggles abroad which it could not control. But always, the avoidance of strife was less important than the preservation of the nation's freedom of action in evaluating and defending its own interests. By maintaining a close balance between its commitments and its power, the nation could choose, in Washington's words, "peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel."

Whether the United States pursued an isolationist foreign policy toward Europe in the 19th century depends upon the definition of isolationism. If an active or positive foreign policy toward other nations requires alliances, military commitments, clearly enunciated preferences for some specific order of power, public disapprobation and tension, including a variety of hot and cold wars, United States relations with Europe between 1815 and 1900 were isolationist indeed. But by that definition the great powers of Europe also pursued isolationist foreign policies, for so stable was post-Napoleonic Europe that with few exceptions the major European nations were not, until late in the century, concerned with war or preparations for war. If nineteenth-century Europe was scarcely demanding of American financial, physical, and emotional resources, it was hardly more so for the countries of Europe. That the European balance of power permitted the United States to enjoy a full century of rapid internal expansion, free of the normal demands of international politics, does not deny that this nation's relations with Europe, Asia, and Latin America were continuous, generally thoughtful, and often intense.

American diplomats, no less than many intellectuals, editors, political writers, and politicians, recognized the importance of the balance of power principle in preserving the security of the United States and the peace of Europe. By the nineties, however, American interests were becoming too universal, too enmeshed in the affairs of Europe and Asia, to be entrusted to the behavior of other nations alone. For the equilibrium of Europe, threatened by the growing power of the German Empire, was no longer self-contained. In a narrowly balanced continental system, the policies of such uncommitted nations as England and the United States carried the burden of future peace and security. Unfortunately, those who viewed America's world relationships in this light could not dispel the illusions created by successive decades of actual noninvolvement in Europe's political and military affairs. The restoration of the continent after the Napoleonic wars created conditions of such stability that the average citizen of the United States, enjoying perennial security at relatively little cost, began to put his faith in the fact of geographic isolation itself. This gradual identification of American security

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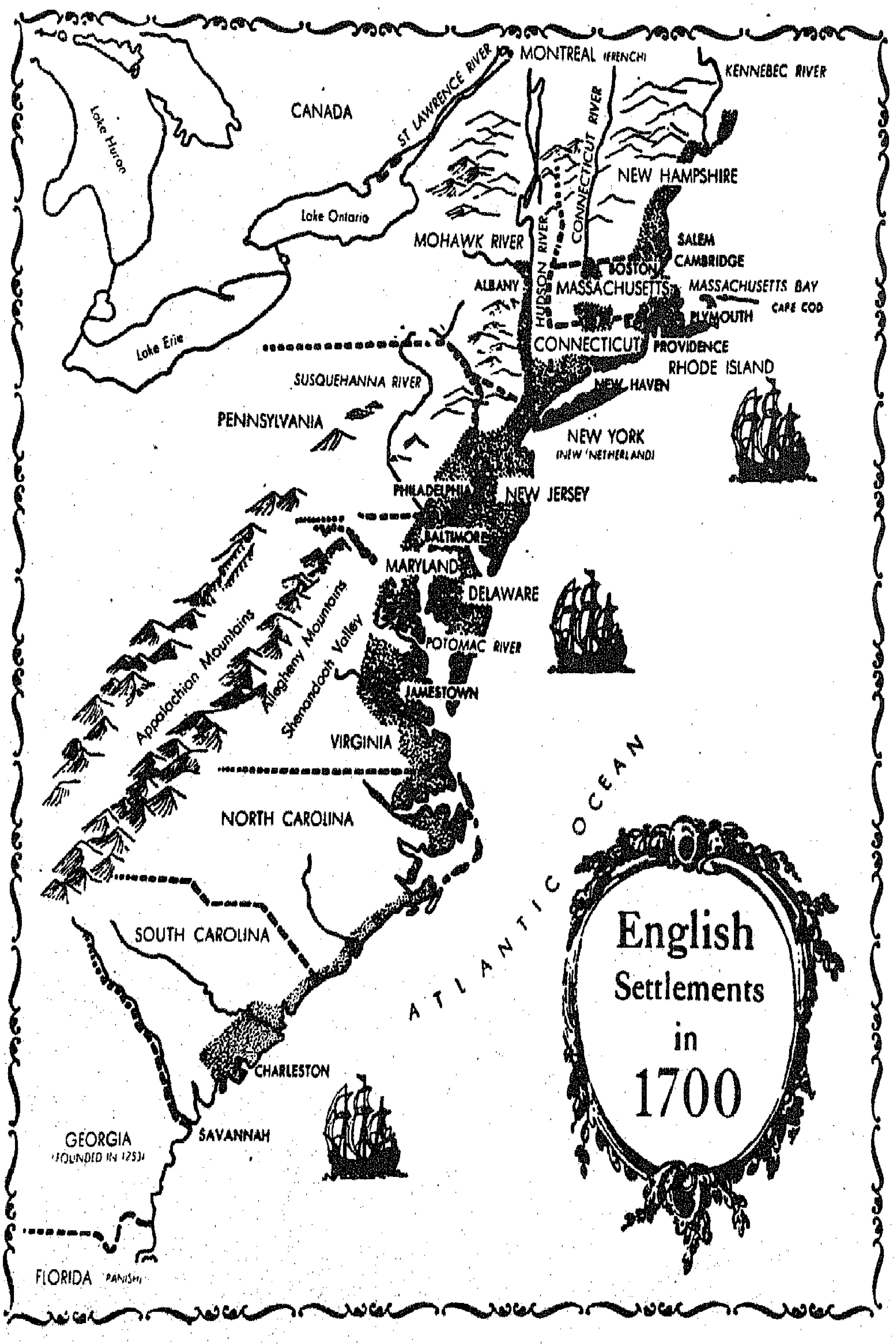


The dotted section on this map indicates the extent of English colonization along the Atlantic Coast in 1700. Organized settlement had not yet spread very far in from the seaboard, and inland boundaries were not yet permanently established. As westward expansion progressed, these boundaries were to cause frequent disputes.

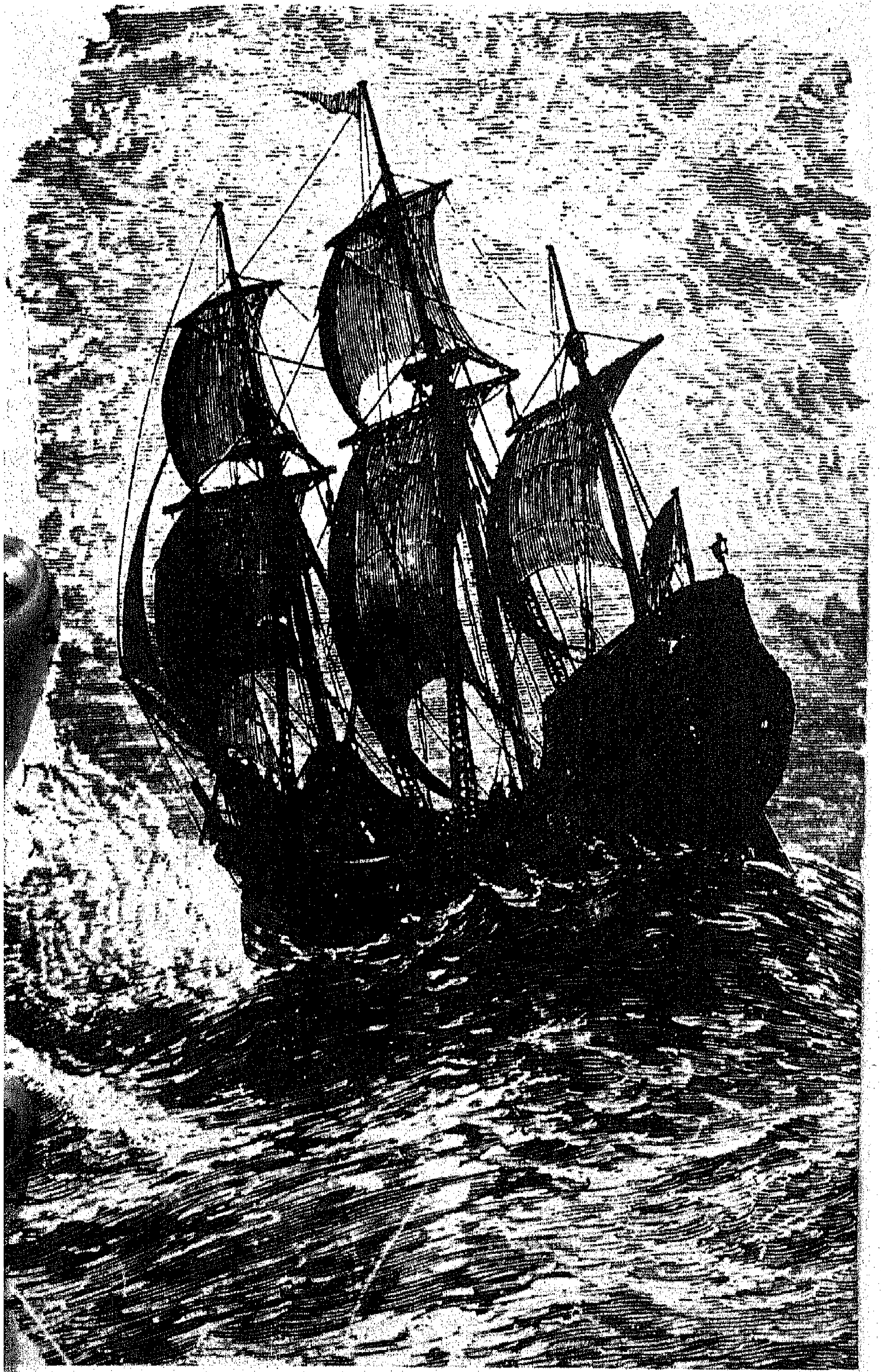
ISSUES AND THEMES

ESSAYS IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

In observation of the American Bicentennial in 1976, the National Endowment for the Humanities commissioned nine distinguished historians to contribute to this collection of essays. Each writer has chosen a fundamental and formative feature of the American situation and experience and has traced its origins, its effects on American attitudes and values, and its consequences for present-day Americans and their society.

This volume will not replace a standard textbook on the history of the United States. However, a reader who uses it to supplement such a textbook is likely to gain a wider and more sensitive appreciation of the American nation and a better understanding of the social and cultural context in which American political and economic institutions have developed and functioned.

Although written for the Bicentennial, these essays trace such a sweep of history that they will not soon become out of date. The bibliographies that follow each essay will also guide interested readers to more detailed studies on specific subjects.



The Mayflower, the ship in which the Pilgrims sailed from Southampton, England to the New World in 1620.

A NATION OF NATIONS

by MICHAEL KAMMEN

What's Past Is Prologue

It is no surprise that the United States became, in a manner of speaking, a nation of nations. Some historians seem to feel that our diversity as a people had almost an element of inevitability about it. Scholars and laymen alike may honestly disagree about the matter of inevitability; but they are likely to join in believing that it has been easier to *achieve* diversity than it has to *explain* it subsequently, or to develop an appropriate rationale for its good governance.

The concept of a nation of nations, for example, implies sensitive issues of sovereignty: which jurisdiction is superior to which, and when are the several levels of government considered to be co-equals? Our unique system of republicanism and federalism was not achieved until the years 1776–1789, and its successful survival was not assured for almost three generations after that. Therefore we must begin by noting that fully two-thirds of our history, from the founding of Jamestown until the end of Reconstruction, was required to establish the constitutional and political bases upon which sovereignty would be acceptably distributed within this "nation of nations."

Yet that notion of heterogeneity—of a composite nation—has had profound *social* nuances as well, nuances even more important, perhaps, than the political and constitutional questions. What has since become the United States was first colonized by members of an English society with a special sense of its own destiny: "The Elect Nation," some called it; or, as John Aylmer, the Elizabethan Bishop of London, exclaimed, "God is English." Having emerged from the Protestant Reformation like a monarch butterfly from its cocoon, the England of Elizabeth fluttered proudly and boldly, contemptuous of her menacing, more powerful neighbors: Bourbon France and Hapsburg Spain. What is more, that self-confidence about England's destiny seemed to be patently justified by the subsequent and steady success of her overseas empire. By 1760, with Wolfe's great victory on the Plains of Abraham and Amherst's at Montreal, Britain reigned supreme in North America. Her colonial system had surpassed that of Spain in profitability and cohesion, absorbed that of the Dutch (by conquering New York in 1664), and then that of France by fierce and stealthy competition. If Britannia did not rule the waves entirely, she often waived the rules!

Meanwhile the Puritans who had settled New England shared a profound sense of being a most particular nation among nations; or, more properly, a people among peoples. The Puritans regarded themselves as a chosen people in the most literal, Old Testament sense of the phrase. As John Winthrop stated in his famous lay sermon at the start of the Great Migration to Massachusetts (1630): "For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon us. Soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our God in this work wee have undertaken [i.e., colonization], and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world."

That poignant sense of being a chosen people, in special but fragile covenant with the Almighty, would endure as a source of strength—and sometimes arrogance—for centuries to come. The patriots of the American Revolution considered themselves an "American Israel," and evangelical Protestants in the nineteenth century—a profoundly important force in American life—liked to think of their country as the "Redeemer Nation."

The religious underpinnings of these conceptions, however, did not remain fixed and immutable. They became slowly but steadily democratized. The seventeenth-century Puritans, for example, had believed that an elect, a communion of invisible saints known only to God, was destined for salvation and everlasting life. Christ's death had atoned for the sins of only *some:* those for whom the Covenant of Grace was a pre-destined gift. By the early nineteenth century, however, when great revivals of religion swept rural and urban America, the notion of limited atonement had been broadened to one of general atonement. Christ had died to atone for the sins of all; or at least, all who would accept him into their hearts.

That democratization carried over into politics, social thought, even the arts and letters. The famous log cabin presidential campaign of 1840, or Ralph Waldo Emerson's doctrine of the perfectibility within reach of each and every common man, testified to a growing inclusiveness (and optimism) within this nation of nations. Walt Whitman summed it up best, perhaps, in the preface to his *Leaves of Grass*, first published in 1855.

> *The genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislatures, nor in its ambassadors or authors or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors . . . but always most in the common people. Their manners, speech, dress, friendships—the freshness and candor of their physiognomy—the picturesque looseness of their carriage . . . their deathless attachment to freedom—their aversion to anything indecorous or soft or mean—the practical acknowledgement of the citizens of one state by the citizens of all other states—the fierceness of their roused resentment—their curiosity and welcome of novelty—their self-esteem and wonderful sympathy—their susceptibility to a slight—the air they have of persons who never knew how it felt to stand in the presence of superiors—the fluency of their speech—their delight in music, the sure symptom of manly tenderness and native elegance of soul . . . their good temper and openhandedness —the terrible significance of their elections—the President's taking off his hat to them not they to him—these too are unrhymed poetry. It awaits the gigantic and generous treatment worthy of it.*

Even so, this people among peoples—with its growing sense of moral superiority to nations elsewhere, and its expansive democracy—still would not bestow equality upon all of its own kind, still would not treat its several constituencies as co-equals. By briefly examining four classic documents, one drawn from each century of our history, we may get some sense of the slow growth—and shock—of recognition.

- "*God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence, hath soe disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poore, some high and eminent in power and dignitie; others mean and in submission.*"—Governor John Winthrop, "*A Modell of Christian Charity*" *(1630).*

- "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*"—Thomas Jefferson, "*The Declaration of Independence*" *(1776).*

- "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal.*"—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "*The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions*" *(1848).*
- "*In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.*"—Chief Justice Earl Warren, "*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*" *(1954).*

Slowly and painfully a wondrous transformation had occurred. The rights and privileges bestowed upon a nation of nations had been broadened. But what about their sense of identity and cohesion? Those problems of perception were equally complex, and deserve our most thoughtful attention. As we came to recognize and even accept our diversity, how did the doing so affect our sense of nationality?

The Founding Peoples

Have you ever noticed that the most persistent image used in books about early American history is the metaphor of seeds and roots? Here are just a few examples: E. K. Chatterton, *Seed of Liberty. The Story of the American Colonies* (1929); Curtis P. Nettels, *The Roots of American Civilization. A History of American Colonial Life* (1938); Constance M. Rourke, *The Roots of American Culture* (1942); Max Savelle, *Seeds of Liberty. The Genesis of the American Mind* (1948); and Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic. The Origin of the American Tradition of Political Liberty* (1953).

There is a perfectly good reason for the persistence of this imagery. Seeking self-knowledge, and assuming that mighty oaks do from acorns grow, we try to identify the particular acorns responsible for the mighty oak of which we are so proud. But there is a risk inherent in that approach to history: the risk of reading the past in the light of the present, and thereby failing to respect the pastness of the past. It had an integrity of its own, of course; and while some of its leading participants, such as Jefferson and John Adams, kept a wary eye upon Posterity, they did not act with foreknowledge of events and trends yet to come. To understand American history properly, therefore, we must accept the past upon its own terms.

To begin, we must recognize that our country was first explored by Europeans who left Genoa, Seville, London and Bordeaux at particular moments in time. If each one brought a certain heritage, he also left friends and problems which remained behind. In Florence, Italy, during the late fifteenth century, for example, a man named Marco Vespucci married the exquisite Simonetta, whose golden tresses and lovely proportions inspired Botticelli to paint the immortal Renaissance canvas called *The Birth of Venus.* When she died prematurely at the age of 23, her coffin was followed through the streets of Florence by friends and kinsmen, among them Leonardo da Vinci and her brother-in-law Amerigo Vespucci. The former, a brilliant inventor and painter, stayed in his native land; but Amerigo Vespucci—a sailor, banker, and writer—migrated to Spain and made incredible voyages to the new world.

Then, in 1507, a geographer named Martin Waldseemüller, who taught at an obscure college in the region called Lorraine, published his famous edition of *Cosomographiae Introductio* and suggested that the new land should "be named Amerige, that is Americ's Land, from Americus the discoverer, a man of sagacious mind, or America. . . . " Despite subsequent controversy, the appellation stuck.

There is a sense in which those who chose to migrate to Amerigo's continent were a self-selecting group, rather than an exact cross-section, or microcosm, of the old world's population. People of an unusually venturesome sort, or the unemployed, or those persecuted on account of religion, or those with anti-authoritarian impulses were more likely to uproot and resettle than the well-paid, well-fed, worshipful majority who were content with the status quo. As John Calvin wrote in justifying capital punishment for blasphemy: "Some object that since the offense consists only in words, there is no need for such severity. But we muzzle dogs, and shall we leave men free to open their mouths as they please? Those who object are like dogs and swine. They murmur that they will go to America where nobody will bother them."

When those rambunctious seekers arrived, they encountered native peoples who had inhabited North America for tens of thousands of years. Some of these "Indians"—so-called because Columbus thought he had reached the East Indies—were friendly and taught the newcomers agricultural secrets of vital benefit. Some disaffected Europeans were even pleased to go and live permanently with their hosts, becoming what one historian has called "white Indians." But at most points of contact there was conflict—over land especially—yet deeply rooted in cultural misunderstanding, diplomatic deviousness, and an assurance of superiority on *both* sides. Samuel Purchas, a prominent English proponent of colonization, fumed in 1625 that "the unnaturall Naturalls" [i.e., natives] had forfeited by "disloyal treason" their "remainders of right." A nation of nations could be exclusive as well as inclusive; and the Europeans defined sovereignty to suit themselves.

The quality of life in seventeenth-century America was so different from our own that a leap of the imagination is required to recapture it. During the first generation, especially, many people died of starvation and disease, while others suffered terribly from malnutrition. Personal frustration and bitter disappointment drove many persons to drink; we know that the per capita consumption of alcohol in this period exceeded European norms by fantastic amounts. Because these earliest colonies were preponderantly male, especially outside of New England, and because women were in such short supply, sexual appetites were often as voracious as the lust for food and drink.

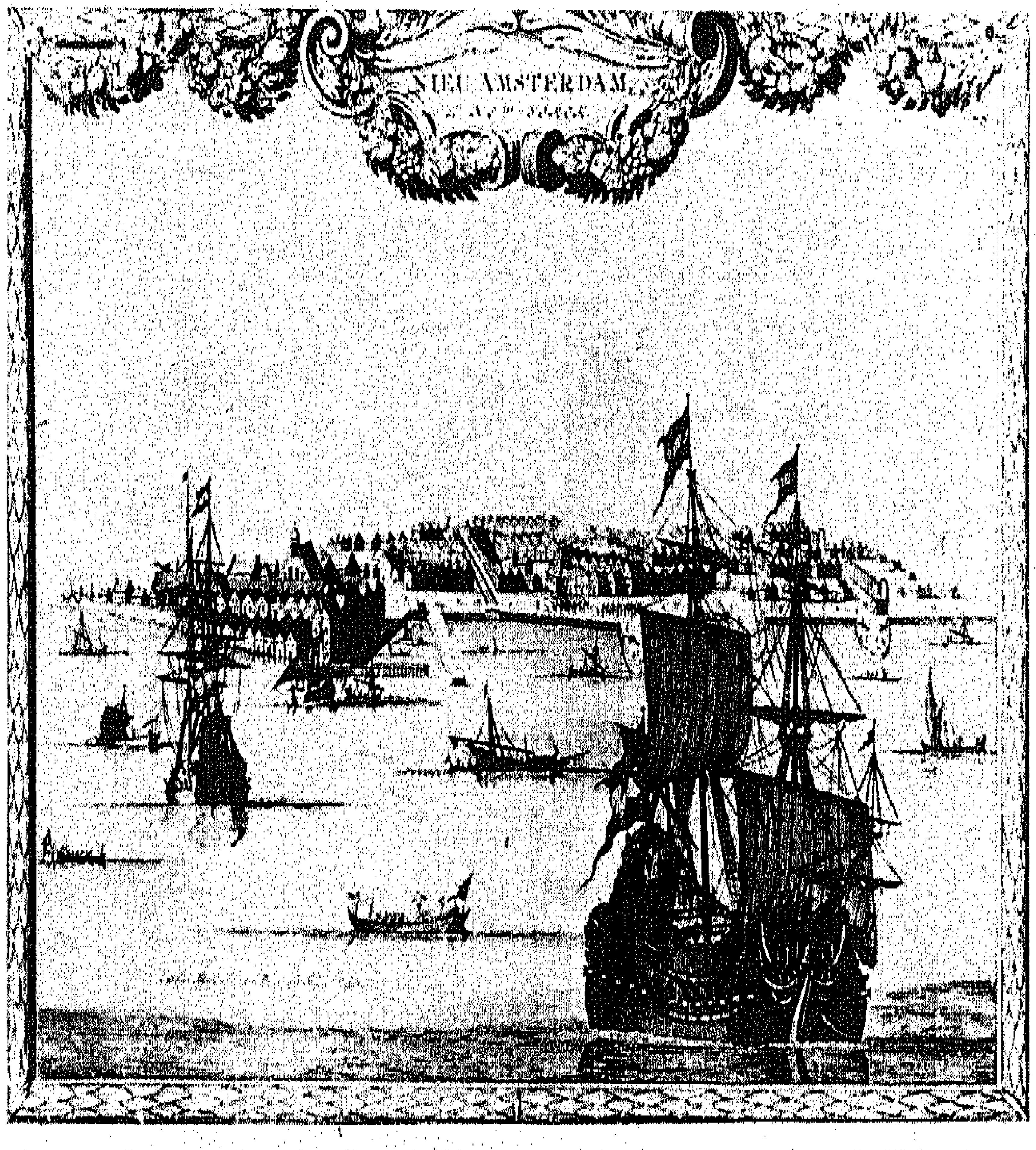
They found, moreover, that social status was so fluid as to be inchoate, indeed confusing. The reasons varied from colony to colony. In Virginia a colonist's status was initially determined by his position of employment in the Virginia Company of London. Only gradually did talent, relative wealth, and political leverage come to determine social status; and then in 1624, when the Crown simply assumed control by taking the colony away from its moribund company, yet another re-evaluation of public identities occurred.

In Massachusetts Bay, too, there was a puzzling proliferation of statuses as fewer and fewer persons qualified for church membership (and thereby for freemanship and the right to vote). After only one generation there were colonists who were both church members and freemen who enjoyed the full rights of citizenship; others who were church members but did not seek freeman status and consequently could neither vote nor hold office; and still others who were merely "inhabitants," i.e. third-class residents whose presence was tolerated and whose rights in the community were poorly defined and ambiguously understood.

In New Netherland still other considerations determined the diversity of statuses. After 1639 persons who were merely employees of the Dutch West India Company co-existed alongside more autonomous burghers who were regarded as self-sufficient denizens in a controlled economy. After 1664 they all became conquered subjects of England's King Charles II as well as proprietary inhabitants in the new domain of his brother, James, Duke of York.

We must also reflect upon the significance of the fact that seventeenth-century culture was predominantly an aural culture. The founding peoples lived amongst pre-literate societies in which the spoken word was more important than the printed word. In 1660 as many as 40 percent of the adult males in New England could not even sign their own names; and literacy was *more* pervasive there than in the middle and southern colonies. Of the 60 percent who could sign, many could do little more than that and were only semi-literate.

These realities may help us to understand their respect for the sermon and the minister (or any fully literate man, for that matter). He interpreted the Word for them; and they were, after all, a people who shaped their lives according to the proper interpretation of Scripture. Persons who could read were able to know things for themselves. Persons who could write were in a position to inform or persuade others. Those who could not were, in the most literal sense, *dependent*. Theirs was the credulous, word-of-mouth world of traditional peasant societies. In the absence of newspapers, they were peculiarly vulnerable to rumor. Every story was news, and all threats of danger had to be taken very seriously. Is it any wonder that respectable folk were designated as persons of "good conversation"? Is it at all surprising that so little of their communication with one another is extant today? Between 1644 and 1676 the Reverend John Fiske preached more than 3,000 sermons in Salem, Wenham, and Chelmsford, Massachusetts; but not one of those sermons survives today.



The port of New York, originally named New Amsterdam, as it was in the early 18th century. An excellent natural harbor established the colony's leading position among the commercial centers of the new world.

What *did* survive, however, were the people themselves. Life expectancy increased in the colonies as the incidence of disease and similar demographic catastrophes declined. Benjamin Franklin and others made elaborate and optimistic calculations about the future population growth of the American people. Ezra Stiles of Newport, Rhode Island, one of the most prominent clergymen and philosophers of the revolutionary era, watched one day in 1767 as busy people walked up and down the public square. He then estimated the population of the world from beginning to end at an average of 800 million persons in each generation. Projecting 150 generations from the initial Creation until Judgment Day, he guessed that there would be a grand total of 120 billion souls to be judged: "An immense and awful assembly," he said.

Just as the future—our children's children—will judge us; so we all, as workaday historians, tend to judge the past. Because our perceptions change from one generation to another, so do the reputations of our forebears. Let us look at just one illustration. As late as the revolutionary era, 1770-1800, Puritanism provided an inheritance that meant a source of pride to such as Stiles, John Adams, and their contemporaries. When *they* spoke of the Founding Fathers, they meant the first colonists: William Bradford, John Cotton, Richard Mather, and their ilk. The revolutionaries looked to those leaders with affection and awe. In 1798 a leading personage in the town of Salem commissioned Samuel McIntre, the architect and wood-carver, to provide a bust of John Winthrop for the community. His rendition of the founding governor of Massachusetts Bay—one of the earlier sculptures in the history of American art—depicts a benign and gentle figure.

With the passage of time, however, responses to the founding peoples underwent dramatic changes. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the son of a French shoemaker and an Irish lass named Mary McGuinness, was born in Dublin in 1848, brought to Boston at the age of six months, and was raised in New York City. He grew up to become one of our greatest sculptors—perhaps *the* greatest—and in 1885 he depicted "The Puritan" as an ominous, forbidding symbol of self-righteous rectitude and invidious judgment.

Thereafter Puritanism came to be held responsible for much that was regarded as most reprehensible in American life: sexual repression, moralistic inhibition, stifling social conformity, and the like. In the twentieth century H. L. Mencken would define Puritanism as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."

In a very real sense the founding peoples had been knocked off their previous pedestals. And not merely by immigrants so graceless as to show, or appear to show, ingratitude to their adopted nationality. It is true that Saint-Gaudens came of French and Irish stock, that Mencken was of German descent, and that Shapiro is Jewish of eastern European origin. But take the fluctuating reputation of George Washington in historical fiction. In James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821), our first successful novel about the Revolution, Washington appears as a figure of the greatest dignity, nobility, and character. In Gore Vidal's *Burr* (1973), on the other hand, Washington appears as a dim-witted fool. Yet Gore Vidal is a direct descendant of revolutionary participants.

The point would seem to be that our founding peoples have undergone striking shifts of reputation. Our task is not one of mere rehabilitation, but rather one of judicious reassessment. An authentic colonial looking-glass reflects but dimly today, with much stippling and shadow. Our proper hope is to see not ourselves in those mirrors, but true images of those long gone.

Two Centuries of Immigrants

Owing to scrupulous research by a new breed of social historians, we are beginning to understand the story of immigrant life with far more precision than we ever have before. One of the most interesting and recurrent themes emerges from the unsuitability of their prior experiences in preparing them for their new lives in a new land. The passenger lists of ships arriving in 1637, for example, reveal that most of the men on board had in fact been *urban* artisans who were now abandoning their traditional vocations to become rural farmers in New England. The same is true of Mormon converts who left Manchester, England, during the 1850s in order to resettle near the Great Salt Lake. The obverse has also been common: peasants from central and southern Europe who crowded into American cities during the decades after 1875.

Radical shifts such as these required double and even triple sets of adjustment: to the new nation and its values, to the new vocation and its ethos, but also to the younger generation just coming of age, with memories shorter but expectations longer than those of their parents. Intergenerational conflict goes back to Isaac the Patriarch and Oedipus the King, at least; but it has been sorely aggravated by the psychic impact of immigration.

Between 1783 when the Revolution ended and 1819, we received only about 250,000 immigrants. All the rest of our phenomenal national growth depended upon natural increase. Beginning in 1820, however, the influx from abroad began a long, slow crescendo; and in that year the Federal government began to record immigration statistics. In consequence we are able to ascertain with some specificity the changing composition of our population. Let us take 1820, 1860, 1900 and 1950 as significant intervals at which to examine the configuration of our ethnic diversity. The figures given below comprise percentage of the total immigration (to the United States) by areas of geographic origin.

AREA	1820	1860	1900	1950
Northwestern Europe	77.5%	53.21%	18.99%	14.04%
Central Europe	11.9	35.52	29.72	58.84
Eastern Europe	.17	.04	23.77	.32
Southern Europe	2.43	13.51	24.18	6.44
Asia	.05	3.5	4.01	1.5
Latin America & Canada	4.61	4.12	1.21	17.67
Africa	.01	.08	.0006	.34
Australia	-0-	-0-	.34	.20

The visibility of those newer groups regarded as "latecomers"—with their crowded living conditions, poverty, and strangely "un-American" appearances—was heightened by the invention of the camera, and especially by its dramatic use in the hands of a Danish-American photojournalist named Jacob Riis. In several respects, one picture by Riis was indeed worth a thousand words. The picture told Progressive reformers, for example, that a nation of nations badly needed help wherever aliens suffered sorely from the slow process of acculturation. It also told racial purists and American nativists, however, who yearned for more homogeneous times, that perhaps our gates had been too widely open for too long. Did we *really* want "huddled masses yearning to breathe free"? By 1900 many doubters had come to wonder, and quite a few of them in good faith.

Urban communities, with their ethnic ghettoes and language barriers to easy Americanization, were no more melting pots than the raw frontier, where peoples of equally diverse nationalities were jealous of their rights, competed fiercely—and contemptuously—with one another. Now that the newly published journals of Alfred Doten are available, we have an extraordinary view of minority group misunderstanding and squabbles in the far West.

Born in 1829 near the shadow of Plymouth Rock, Doten became a member of the Pilgrim Mining Company and set sail (around the Horn) for the California gold fields in 1849, that *annus mirabilis*. Instead of returning after two years, his fortune made, Doten remained for more than half a century as a miner, rancher, and eventually a newspaperman covering the Nevada silver boom. Here are his perceptions of three major groups on the mining frontier.

- Of the Mexicans (at Rich Gulch, Calaveras County, California, 1852): "I found some Frenchmen of my acquaintance working in the gulsh near the mouth of the arroya and they told me that some 4 or 5 Mexicans washed my dirt the first part of last week. . . . While I was talking with them, two Mexicans came up the gulsh, took the buckets and were going off with them when I told them to stop. They stopped and we had quite a dispute. . . . We had some high words and as they were both armed they felt pretty saucy. They took the buckets and were about to carry them off when I cocked my gun and pointed it at them, telling them to drop the buckets or I would shoot them. They dropped the buckets and made off, one up the gulsh and the other down. . . . God damn their thieving Mexican souls eternally to the hottest corner of hell and may every sack of the dirt which they have stolen from me turn into brimstone to help roast their damned infernal carcasses—Amen."
- Of the Chinese (at Fort Grizzly, California, 1854): Doten stated in a column for his hometown newspaper, *Plymouth Rock*, that the Chinese were excluded from all the good mining grounds, but remain numerous in the region nevertheless. "John Chinaman is as successful, or at any rate saves up about as much money, as the generality of the mining population" through hard work and thrift. Like other groups, however, they fought among themselves over "local animosities of home, feuds and quarrels of clans," and disputes over claims, gambling, and women.
- Of the Indians (at Fort Grizzly, 1855): "These Indians here in the mining region are generally of a quiet, inoffensive disposition, although on the frontier they are rather inclined to be unruly and troublesome as yet. They have a great aversion to labor; indeed a Digger Indian never works when he can possibly get along without it; he had always rather beg than work for his food; but when he happens to stand in need of a little money, he generally repairs with his squaw to the most convenient "diggins" and sets her to work digging and carrying dirt, while he sits in some comfortable place by the water and washes out the dirt in a pan as she brings it to him."

An Anglo-Saxon sense of superiority, to be sure; but the difficult problem to resolve historically is whether such prejudice pre-dates economic competition, or, results from it? Honest men may disagree. Whatever our answers may be, the fact remains that skin color, religion, ideology and nationality have all assisted some Americans in defining others both as personal enemies *and* as threats to the very existence of a republic perceived in quite parochial terms. Hence the helpfulness of keeping Indians on reservations, Blacks in ghettoes, and Japanese in camps of detention.

Perhaps it is the American admiration for achievement, especially physical achievement, which has helped to reduce some of these hurdles to inter-group understanding. Jim Thorpe the Carlisle Indian, Bronko Nagurski the Pole, Marion Motley the Negro, and Franco Harris the Black-Italian: what do they all share in common? The answer, of course, is brute strength and uncommon skill as running backs in football. A nation of nations can respect that, all the more as football comes to rival baseball as the national pastime.

The meaning of tolerance has not been easily learned in this country, but it has been absorbed by many who respond with generosity to Judge Learned Hand's definition of the spirit of liberty: "the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women. The spirit of Liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias."

Out of Many, One

One of the most striking tendencies in American history derives from the fact that similar institutional structures so often emerged from disparate origins. Take the case of representative government. Even though some of the colonies began as chartered corporations, others as proprietorships, and still others as royal colonies (direct possessions of the Crown), the nature of representative government became strikingly similar in all of them very quickly, despite great discrepancies in the *circumstances* under which they developed.

Even so, local attachment and partisanship long remained an obstacle to social cohesion and political coalitions. Here is John Adams writing to his wife from Philadelphia, just 200 years ago, on October 29, 1775:

> *There is in the human breast a social affection which extends to our whole species, faintly indeed, but in some degree. The nation, kingdom, or community to which we belong is embraced by it more vigorously. It is stronger still towards the province to which we belong, and in which we had our birth. It is stronger and stronger as we descend to the county, town, parish, neighborhood and family, which we call our own. And here we find it often so powerful as to become partial, to blind our eyes, to darken our understandings and pervert our wills.*

Is it any wonder that Adams subsequently expressed his amazement when 13 clocks struck as one in 1776?

Precisely because such blatant and troublesome diversity existed, Americans began the relentless pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp they called their "national character." The quest started in the mid-1780's, just as soon as independence had been secured; and it persisted with passionate intensity for more than three decades. "I glory in the character of a Washington," remarked John Adams in 1785, "because I know him to be only an exemplification of the American character." In 1820 *The American Journal* printed an essay entitled NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. "It is an old saying," it opened, "that the Spaniards begin a colony with a church, the French with a ball-room, and the English with a tavern."

Given the prevalence of stereotypes such as these, the question demanding clarification was simply this: in a world of distinctive nations, what distinguished our own? Democracy and a society with opportunity open to merit, some said. A republican government which served and represented citizens rather than subjects, observed others. Still others, however, doubted whether any meaningful unity could arise from such vast and sprawling multiplicity. No single artistic vision, for instance, could embrace it all: we needed Thomas Cole's firey "Schroon Mountain" in the Adirondacks (1833), the pensive "Fur Traders Descending the Missouri" by George Caleb Bingham (1845), and the mauve splendor of "Lake Tahoe" by Albert Bierstadt (1868). Westward the course of empire; and almost as many artists were needed as there were magnificent landscapes within that empire. Our own version of Romanticism was conditioned by our special heritage of Calvinism, which meant that an appreciation of Nature's sublime wonders could not be detached from a lingering sense of man's sinfulness.

The notion of empire—an American Empire whose manifest destiny was to convey democratic institutions to the less fortunate inhabitants of the earth—seemed to many the true meaning of E Pluribus Unum. What troubled their vision, however, was the persistent imperfection of those democratic institutions (not to mention social disintegration) at home. First it was the failure of states, sections, and the nation to resolve their proper relationship with respect to the question of slavery. Then it was the full emergence of palpable class differences and class-consciousness during the later nineteenth century. Creditors and predators seemed to prey upon the hapless victims of a nation undergoing rapid industrialization. Finally it was the need to adjust the value systems of an older agrarian society to the newer realities of an urban and technological era. As one college president put it in 1920, he wanted to combine "the idealism of ancient Athens with the industrialism of modern America."

There is an ironic sense in which the epigram "out of many, one" best applies to the myopic response of European-Americans to the Indians.

Long before the native Americans had been dispossessed and virtually exterminated, like so many buffalo, the cliché arose that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." Equally sad, whites managed to reduce the extraordinary diversity of our tribal cultures to a mental image of simply, the Indian, as just one more type of *homo sapiens*.

Here is an example of the natives' loss of identity through white American misunderstanding. In 1817 a craftsman named William Luke carved a figurehead for the new *U.S.S. Delaware*. The wooden image was intended to portray Tamanend, a great chief of the Delaware nation, a lover of peace and friend of William Penn. During the Civil War that ship sank at Norfolk, Virginia. In 1866 the figurehead was salvaged from the wreck, however, and sent to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. But to the midshipmen there, Tamanend had no historical meaning or importance, so the effigy casually acquired a series of alternate names: Powhatan, then King Philip, and finally Tecumseh, which has stuck. He has since undergone major face-liftings, in 1906 (cement and putty) and 1929 (bronze). But the reductionism is clear enough: out of many, one.

Our unstable pluralism has historically comprised an abundance of special interests and corporations; of political factions and parties; of secret societies and voluntary associations; of sects and denominations. Is it any wonder, that the achievement of cohesion has seemed so elusive? Is it any wonder, then, that "a rope of sand" has been such a persistent image in the language used to analyze American public affairs? Thomas Hutchinson employed it in 1768, William Bollan in 1773, and Washington Irving in 1809. Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge still used it in 1876 and 1890, respectively, when each referred to the futility of independent splinter parties in the political arena.

Is it any wonder that nativism and mistrust of foreigners have been such important factors in American social thought during the past century? The fear of "mongrelization" made many nostalgic for the "good old days" (paradoxically, before we had achieved nationhood) when the "national stock" was more homogeneous. They did not want their beloved country to become either a Babel or a Babylon. Hence this invidious statement in 1896 from the Commissioner of Common Schools in New York City:

> *I consider it the paramount duty of our public schools, apart from the educational knowledge to be instilled into our pupils, to form American citizens of them, to take up and gather together all the heterogeneous elements of this cosmopolitan population, and through the crucible of the public school to fuse and weld them into one homogeneous mass, obliterating from the very earliest moment all the distinguishing foreign characteristics and traits, which the beginners may bring with them, as obstructive, warring, and irritating elements.*

It even caused cousins to intermarry among the elite as a way of preserving the purity of their bloodlines: Gideon Welles, of Lincoln's cabinet, married his first cousin; Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, married Mary Channing Wister; and Henry E. Huntington, the railroad tycoon, married the wife of his deceased uncle. Where nationality seemed to verge upon disintegration, it seemed wisest, to many, to keep it "all in the family."

Many of the newcomers responded by seeking to achieve a new nationality without entire loss of their old identities. They recorded these quests in books that have become minor classics in our literature: *The Making of Americans* (1906–08) by Gertrude Stein, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917) by Abraham Cahan, and *The Americanization of Edward Bok* (1920) by E. W. Bok.

In 1908 an English author named Israel Zangwill produced a play about the mixture and assimilation of immigrants in America. He called it "The Melting-Pot," a catchphrase which enjoyed common currency for half a century thereafter. Even though his play's title caught the public fancy, in reality the so-called melting pot idea did not even consistently succeed among like-minded clusters of similar persuasion. On the lower east side of Manhattan, for example, varied and fragmented groups of Jewish immigrants formed a Kehillah—a comprehensive communal structure intended to ease their common problems of social and economic adjustment—between 1908 and 1922. Despite its representative assembly and its centralized bureaus of education, philanthropy, religion, and social morals, however, the Kehillah eventually deteriorated because of the centrifugal forces inherent among its several constituent groups.

Yet another obstacle to cohesion may be found in the complicated relationship between the Americanization process of immigrants, their employers' desire for increased efficiency, and factory work habits inculcated among the newcomers. As Herbert G. Gutman, a distinguished historian of labor has written, "The American working class was continually altered in its composition by infusions, from within and without the nation, of peasants, farmers, skilled artisans, and casual day laborers who brought into industrial society ways of work and other habits and values not associated with industrial necessities and the industrial ethos. Some shed these older ways to conform to new imperatives. Others fell victim or fled, moving from place to place. Some sought to extend and adapt older patterns of work and life to a new society. Others challenged the social system through varieties of collective associations." In sum, the constantly changing composition of the American working class throughout the past century and a half has caused periodic recurrences of earlier patterns of social behavior and adjustments ordinarily associated with the earliest phases of industrialization.

Perhaps the melting pot was in reality a mosaic? a patchwork quilt? a salad bowl? Whatever the preferred metaphor, our most astute historians seem to agree that American society has been characterized by what one calls "pluralism within a consensus," and what another refers to as "pluralistic integration." We tend to retain our discrete social identities while sharing a common set of assumptions about the stable polity, the viable economy, and the proper need for personal freedom combined with social responsibility.

Achieving an appropriate balance between these last two, however, has not always been easy. The reality of disorder, and anxieties about potential disorder, have persisted in our communities. Indeed, those twin concerns have contributed to the associative impulse in American life—an impulse which has brought some people together in an effort to restrain or exclude others. These organizations and vigilante groups changed subtly with the passage of time, in ways that are instructive for an understanding of the warp and woof of communal experience. One set of comparisons may serve to illustrate the point.

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, when Ithaca, New York, was a rough and ready frontier town, an outfit called The Ithaca Moral Society came into being in order to control the rowdy teamsters and other transient undesirable types, like circus performers. The organization was really a kind of fraternal society; it aimed to preserve the investment and economic stake of the town fathers by maintaining a good reputation for the community.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the not-necessarily-so-gay-nineties, there existed in Ithaca a different organization known as the Society for the Prevention of Crime. It was more concerned with private morality. Through it the "better people" sought to regulate the personal behavior, not of persons passing through, but of permanent residents. In defense of middle-class values, and especially the family, drunken fathers and loose women were admonished. Here is a typical entry from the Society's report, dated June 11, 1897:

> *Miss ———— says her sister, sixteen years old, is going wrong. The girl was called in and admonished. There has been no trouble since.*
>
> *Mrs. ———— asking aid. Her husband will not work, uses bad language, and sets a bad example before his children. The husband was warned.*

Although the many could coerce the one, some individuals did have the option of defiance, or even departure. The experience of Roger Williams, who was willing to leave Massachusetts for the wilderness rather than conform, has been repeated many thousands of times since the winter of 1635-36. So too has the pluralistic and polyphonic society he established in Rhode Island: many views, many voices. Not surprisingly, some of our most distinctive American voices—and some of our most valued contributions to western thought—have belonged to the great exponents of pluralism. William James was our psychologist of religious pluralism. Horace Kallen, our theorist of social diversity, saw a close bond between ethnic separateness and national cohesion. And Carl Becker was our advocate of Everyman as his own historian.

Becker's philosophy of history, called relativism, has special resonance in a nation with many angles of vision. There is a sense in which we tend to be near-sighted or far-sighted (even myopic), for instance, in direct proportion to our personal relationship to the nation's development. That is, members of many ethnic groups are inclined to be interested in American history only since the first members of their particular group arrived. The sub-groups and sections may even appropriate folk heroes to their own purposes—just as Daniel Boone acquired different sorts of reputations in the North, South, and West during the generation after 1820. In so far as that has happened, in so far as a coherent but complex national history tends to become fragmented in order to be comprehensible, our experience has been (in a way): out of one, many.

We Pledge Allegiance

So many of our earliest immigrants had had unfortunate experiences with figures in authority at home that their greatest wish here was merely to be left alone. Buffeted by bishops, kings, and landlords, their heart's desire looked to a land free of obligations. Those who came as indentured servants or as slaves, moreover, dreamed of liberation from the terms of their bondage. Many made the dream become a reality. Between 1620 and 1750, for example, the Massachusetts court records show at least 676 cases of runaway servants.

Simultaneously, political allegiance to persons of public authority became increasingly tenuous within the British imperial framework. The colonists learned about the concept of social contract from the philosopher

John Locke, but after they had already tested it within the crucible of their own experience. In 1689, when dramatic rebellions overthrew several of His Majesty's governments in America, written justifications expressed the conviction that a higher (Scriptural) law and principles of constitutionalism took precedence over mere political allegiance. Because the discontent was nearly unanimous, and because hardships had been suffered for quite some time, then a proper "Disposition entered in the Body of our People to assert our *Liberties* against the Arbetrary Rulers that were fleecing them." The oft repeated justification for breaking one's bond of obligation was simply this: Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.

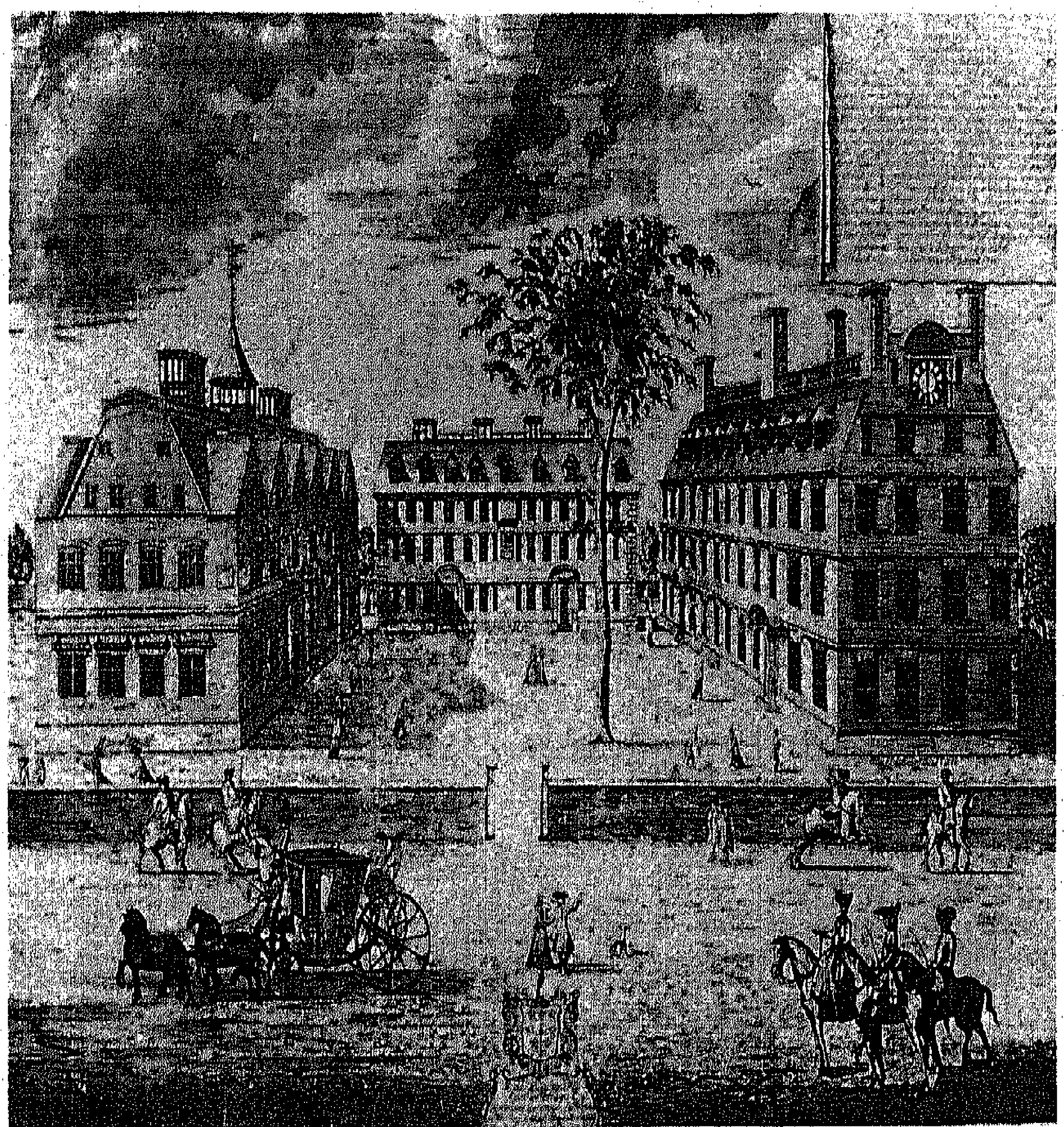
When the Revolution came in 1776, therefore, many found it relatively easy to shift their allegiance from George III to George Washington, from the would-be Patriot King to a patriotic commander-in-chief, from George the Brute to George the childless father-figure, and from a king without compassion to a symbol of benign authority without passion. For others, however, Tories and nervous neutrals, the Revolution brought a crisis of conscience because they could not violate the oath of allegiance they once had taken as British subjects, or would not, as Quakers, bear arms against their fellow men. Only slowly would their loyalties and priorities be reassessed; but between war's end in 1783 and the new nation's inauguration in April, 1789, they either departed for exile abroad or else sought forgiveness and acceptance among their kinsmen and countrymen.

For those who did pledge their allegiance to the new state governments and the Constitution of the United States, what did they expect of government in return? It is difficult to generalize about four million people—at that time the largest republican nation ever known in human history—but it would appear that freedom from excessive governmental interference, coupled with physical security from outsiders were two of their most basic expectations.

Another was what James Madison described, in 1788, as "private rights and public happiness." Happiness! That elusive phrase was on so many lips during the American Enlightenment. What did it mean to them? Increase Mather had said, a century before, that "holiness is happiness"; his son Cotton had written in 1692 that every man is entitled to Life, Estate, Liberty, and Family. For most members of the Jeffersonian generation, happiness seemed to imply physical security and material prosperity. They assumed, moreover, that much of the task of good government inhered in facilitating "the pursuit of happiness." Hence John Adams's excitement at the prospect of helping to create "the wisest and happiest government that human wisdom can contrive."

Whatever the meaning of Happiness may have been, its relationship to allegiance and civic obligation became tenuous during the middle third of the nineteenth century. First, because those state constitutions written during a state of nature back in 1776-1780 proved to be inadequate to changing realities and, in many cases, had to be rewritten during the Jacksonian era. Second, because the radical abolitionists who crusaded against slavery came to believe that our Federal Constitution helped to sanction an immoral institution in which humans were held as property. (On July 4, 1854, when William Lloyd Garrison publicly burned the Constitution, he said: "So perish all compromises with tyranny.") And third, because many southerners ultimately decided that their "peculiar institution" was more sacred to them than the Union itself.

The consequence, of course, was an escalation of defiance in which many allegiances proved to be too fragile to endure. If pro-slavery forces passed fugitive slave laws, the advocates of freedom countered with their personal liberty laws. When Armageddon arrived in 1861, it happened to be easier for most northerners to keep their several allegiances co-ordinated—to country and community, God and morality—than it



The first college in the United States was Harvard, founded in Massachusetts in 1636.

was for most southerners. And so the Union suffered four years of tortuous agony.

Loyalty and allegiance would be redefined yet again during Reconstruction (especially in order to rehabilitate those who had joined the Confederacy), would be reasserted during World War I (when sauerkraut was renamed "liberty cabbage"), and once more during the so-called "Cold War," when the House Committee on Un-American Activities virtually asphyxiated the vital breath of dissent.

What we have slowly and painfully come to appreciate during the past decade is that dissent is not necessarily subversive; that mindless loyalty does the nation a grave disservice; and, most of all, that a proper balance between dutiful allegiance and doubtful dissent is absolutely vital for national well-being and human freedom.

As the structure and texture of American society became ever more complex in the twentieth century, many persons developed multiple attachments, both national and local, through which their loyalties came to be defined and interconnected. Athletic teams and Odd Fellows, national corporations and churches, the Klan and the American Medical Association all, to a considerable degree, helped to shape the social responses and even the voting behavior of people who no longer looked to a social elite for leadership, or worshipped at the "Shrine of Party," or voted as their parents had as a matter of habit—all of which had pretty much been the case between the Revolution and the Civil War.

In the past generaion or so, many Americans have also enlarged their expectations of government, especially in contrast with those more modest assumptions of the Jeffersonians. The meaning of the notion of a "welfare state," for example, depends upon the widespread assumption that this Nation will take full care of its taxpayers, if not from the cradle to the grave, then at least from the first time one becomes unemployed to beyond retirement. The steady expansion of our social security system and medical care arrangements over the past four decades has made most of us dependents of a sort, has registered our numerical identities in the memory of a common Univac, and to that degree, at least, has given us a common nationality, a common currency, and a burgeoning bureaucracy.

Coda

In a country so diverse as ours, it can hardly be surprising that Americans have had overlapping visions of the nation's destiny. The true nature of pluralism and allegiance, however, of freedom's meaning and mission, may well be encapsuled in the life of Sojourner Truth. She was born in 1797, a slave named Isabella. For thirty years she belonged to several

masters in the Hudson Valley, and her first language was Dutch. In 1827, when one master broke his pledge to release her prior to New York's statutory date for emancipation, she fled to another farmer who purchased her services. In that same year, with the help of Quakers, she successfully sued to require the return and freedom of her son, who had been sold illegally to a planter in Alabama. In that same year she, too, became legally free, soon joined a series of communal and religious groups, became an evangelist, and in 1843 took the memorable name by which we know her.

In succeeding years she met the white abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe, as well as the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Thereafter she lectured throughout the free states: on the evils of slavery, and on behalf of women's rights and temperance. As an abolitionist and as a feminist, she explained, "The Lord has made me a sign unto this nation, an' I go round a-testifyin', an' showin' on 'em their sins agin my people." She was a gaunt, charismatic woman, six feet tall; and on one occasion a listener insisted that no woman could speak so powerfully or so well. She must be a man in disguise. Whereupon Truth tore open her blouse and exposed her breasts to demonstrate that her sex was indeed capable of such a witness to the meaning of freedom. In 1864 she was received by President Lincoln; and after the bloody war to preserve the Union she worked on behalf of the black freedmen. Sojourner Truth died in 1883, aged 86. Her quest for freedom with dignity lives on.

In 1863, one year before her interview with Abraham Lincoln, two statues by Thomas Crawford were installed upon massive brackets above the bronze door of the Senate wing, East Portico, of the United States Capitol. The statues are female figures symbolic of Justice and History. One supports a volume bearing the inscription "Justice, Law, Order," and a pair of scales lie by her right hand. The other holds a scroll inscribed "History, July 1776." But the face of Justice has in recent years deteriorated, so that her eyes seem both sunken and swollen with tears, her lips puffed to a tormented pout. History looks even more distressed, her eyes and vision clouded by discoloration, her mouth grotesquely twisted into an embarrassing sneer.

If Justice and History seem to have suffered in recent years, our Bicentennial provides the ideal occasion for a face-lifting and for rededication. A nation of nations may be known by the souls of its statuary. Surely it can be seen in the faces of its monuments. If our monuments express our ideals, then renewal demands a common standard of Justice which all may regard as fair, as well as a sense of History in which all might want to share.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Alexander Alland, Sr., *Jacob A. Riis. Photographer & Citizen* (Millerton, N. Y.: Aperture, Inc., 1974). This is a provocative picture book accompanied by a thoughtful text. The latter has a chapter, for example, on "The Young Immigrant," while the portfolio section is entitled "The Instantaneous Camera as a Consecrated Pen."

B **Bernard Bailyn,** *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974). A biographical approach to the problems of loyalty and allegiance in the American Revolution, this book is about the losers: "those whose lives were disrupted, who suffered violence and vilification, who were driven out of the land and forced to resettle elsewhere in middle life and died grieving for the homes they had lost."

ND/B/C/M/AUC **Daniel J. Boorstin,** *The Americans, The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1973). A sweeping analysis of American social history during the past century, this volume pays special attention to patterns of change within various sorts of "communities," and examines both centrifugal as well as centripetal factors in American life.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark, ed., *The Journals of Alfred Doten, 1849–1903* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1973), 3 vols. A compelling and candid first-hand account of frontier life during the half-century following the incredible Gold Rush to California. What emerges with especial force is the interplay of immigrants, aliens, and native Americans in the crucible of fierce economic competition.

ND/C/M **Eugene D. Genovese,** *Roll, Jordan, Roll. The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974). A comprehensive study—social, economic, and ideological—of what Genovese calls "the Black Nation." Broadly based in diverse sources, and richly textured, it deals with slave disobedience and "disloyalty," with miscegenation, and with religion as a primary source of communal cohesion.

Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants. A Study of Acculturation* (New York: Atheneum, 1972). First published in 1941, this seminal monograph is one of the finest available case studies of the process of arrival, economic and physical adjustment, social conflict, and the development of group consciousness.

Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). A collection of thematic essays on patterns of migration—with special reference to American expansion, democracy, Puritanism, and the emergence of a distinctive national culture—by one of the earliest scholars to pioneer in the field of immigration history.

AUC **John Higham,** *Strangers in the Land. Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963). An immensely important and subtle book about American responses—social, political, and ideological—to the most intense period of immigration. It is especially well-informed on the diverse patterns of xenophobia and the "crusade for Americanization."

Harold M. Hyman, *To Try Men's Souls. Loyalty Tests in American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959). A comprehensive examination of why loyalty tests came into existence at certain times, what forms they took, how the authorities administered them, "and with what gains to the cause the tests were supposed to support."

ND/C **Winthrop Jordan,** *White Over Black. American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968). A massive and brilliant study of English confrontations with Africans, their enslavement, and the patterns of control, rationalization, and impact upon white psyches thereafter.

ND/B/C/M/AUC **Michael Kammen,** *People of Paradox. An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civilization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972). An interpretive essay which concentrates upon the first half of American history, and stresses the quest for institutional legitimacy in a setting of unstable pluralism.

ND/B/C/AUC **David M. Potter,** *History and American Society*, ed. by Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). These posthumously gathered essays, written by one of the half-dozen most original and thoughtful American scholars of the twentieth century, focus upon the historical meaning of nationalism, the national character, and alienation from authority in United States history.

Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny. A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Chicago Quadrangle Books, 1963). First published in 1935, this classic explores the ideological evolution of a geopolitical notion which has been central to the American experience, especially in the nineteenth century.

Robert H. Wiebe, *The Segmented Society: An Historical Preface to the Meaning of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). A brief, thoughtful, but somewhat abstract essay with especially pertinent chapters concerning "The Units of Life." "Liberty, Equality, and Segregation," and "A Whole Society."

In 1966 **Oscar Handlin** published a provocative volume of documents entitled *Children of the Uprooted* thereby following in the tradition of **Frederick Jackson Turner,** who had written, four decades earlier, a stimulating essay entitled "Children of the Pioneers" (reprinted in Turner's *The Significance of Sections in American History* [1932], ch. 10). A discussion based upon a comparative reading of these two works might be a fruitful activity. **B/M**

THE LAND OF PLENTY

by VERNON CARSTENSEN

In 1588 Thomas Hariot, one of the planters of the first English colony ventured in America, published a book, "*A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*". Although the Roanoke colony failed, this book, the first in English to deal with the American land, was "directed to the adventurers, favourers, and welwillers of the action for the inhabiting and planting there." Hariot acknowledged that there had been many "envious, malicious, and slanderous reports" on the colony, but he regarded such reports as "trifles that are not worthy of wise men to bee thought upon." Accordingly, his book would be devoted to three positive themes. "In the first," he wrote, "I will make declaration of such commodities there alreadie found or to be raised, which will not onely serve the ordinary turnes of you which are and shall bee the planters and inhabitants, but such an overplus sufficiently to bee yelded, or by men of skill to bee provided, as by way of trafficke and exchaunge with our owne nation England, will enrich your selves the providers . . ."

That "overplus sufficiently to bee yelded or by men of skill to bee provided" did not appear quickly in the English or any other "trafficke." Nineteen years would pass before the first permanent colony was planted on the low-lying and poisonous lands of Jamestown, but in the years that followed, the flow of what Hariot called the "marchantable commodities" from the new land would increase steadily—almost in arithmetic progression. By the 1880's the flood of cheap food and fiber from the American lands had become so abundant that even English workmen, it was said, could eat white bread and beef. For almost a hundred years thereafter American farmers dwelt under what to them was the ominous shadow of a farm surplus. In 1974, however, at the World Food Conference in Rome, there were cries of despair, anger and even indignation at word that the "inexhaustible" productivity of American farms was reaching or had reached a limit.

The story that runs from Thomas Hariot and his promise of an "overplus" of "marchantable commodities" that were "to bee yelded" to the planters who ventured to the New World, to the melancholy conclusions in Rome is made up of many strands, but overwhelmingly it is the story of the occupation and the use of American land and all of the vast resources it held. And it is a relatively short story in terms of recorded history. Less than six human lives that reached the Biblical three score years and ten, in tandem, cover the whole span of time from the Lost Colony of Roanoke to the bleak conference in Rome.

The first plantations grew slowly. But before the first decade of Virginia settlement had run out, John Rolfe and others had found a tobacco that Englishmen would buy and Virginia had a cash crop. In Plymouth Colony Squanto would serve as the first county agent by teaching the Pilgrims how to plant, tend and harvest corn. Corn provided a food crop of immense importance, as John Smith, William Bradford and many others would testify.

The Englishmen and others who came brought with them the seeds, the tools, the methods of farming and the folk beliefs of their forebears. Wheat and cotton, like the colonists, were emigrants. The Indians of North America had no domestic animals except the dog, so all farm animals—cattle, horses, sheep, swine, poultry—were brought from Europe or others parts of the world. The colonists were quick to adopt the great Indian crops of tobacco and corn and the Indian ways of farming. They also took his corn lands if it was safe to do so and adopted some of his beliefs as to how best to propitiate the gods of harvest. There emerged a system of American farming neither wholly Indian nor European.

A Shrinking Frontier?

By 1783, the year in which American Independence was recognized by England, the English and others had been on the eastern seaboard for a century and a half. They had spread from Georgia to Maine and in some places they had pushed inland to the Appalachian mountains. Already there were small islands of settlement beyond the mountains, along the Ohio River and scattered in what would become Kentucky and Tennessee. The new nation, although born in defiance of the British monarchy, exhibited an imperial appetite of its own. In the first half of the 19th century the United States acquired the vast region of Louisiana, the lands spreading from East Florida to California and, treating England as an imperial equal, accepted the extension of the 49th parallel as the northern boundary of the Oregon Territory. Alaska and Hawaii would be acquired after the Civil War.

The march of westward moving settlers nearly matched the expansive spirit of their government. In 1792 Kentucky was sufficiently populated and the mother state of Virginia sufficiently accommodating, so that Kentucky was admitted as the first trans-Appalachian state, the first great salient to be driven into the interior of the country. In less than 30 years Missouri would become the first state organized in the trans-Mississippi country and in 1850 California, newly taken from Mexico, would be the first state on the Pacific.

Territorial expansion and the rapid organization of territories and states to the west were clear signs of the march of hundreds of thousands of land seekers and others who pushed west in constantly increasing numbers. From 1607 to the present, America has been the magnet that attracted well over 40,000,000 emigrants in what has been the largest and longest sustained voluntary migration in human history. To be sure only a small proportion came to seek land itself, but overwhelmingly they

Settlers in the new lands, opened by America's westward migration in the nineteenth century, found an abundance of wood and water, with plentiful game and rich soil.

came to share in one way or another the abundant resources of this vast and seemingly limitless land.

The people who were a part of the westering march moved in answer to whatever inner voices spoke to them or whatever chemistry impelled them. They came singly, in families, as members of a community on the move, or sometimes even as a part of an organized colony bent on creating its own special Eden even in the desert lands of Utah. Some, of course, were propelled by other reasons: to escape a hangman's noose, a debtor's prison, an angry and intractable parent, an unexpired indenture, a termagant spouse, or just for the hell of it. Within the movement are many patterns. Some, lemming-like, moved west within the latitude of their homeland; others drifted with the wind; some seem to have had energy enough for only the great first move from Europe to America and today their descendants cling to the land of their ancestors; others, once uprooted, never settled firmly anywhere and their constant movement seduces solemn statisticians into asserting that America is a nation of movers.

These land seekers were so various as to defy all but the widest generalizations. Not all sought land, but among those who wanted land the farm seekers were by far the most numerous. But there were also those who wanted timber lands, mineral lands, water power sites and town sites, and there were those who sought adventure, a new start, a chance to "grow up with the country." The short biographies of those who came to New Salem, Illinois, prepared for the restoration of that village, exhibit in microcosm the different concerns of young Abraham Lincoln's fellow villagers.

Contemporary observers and census takers seem to agree that the pull of new land (except where gold was involved) was weakened by distance, that most settlers in new areas came from adjacent territories and states, fewer from states further east, and still fewer from Europe. The initial movement to new lands was predominantly a movement of youth and poverty. Census takers found the largest part of the population clustered in groups between the ages of 20-30 and under the age of five. Clearly the business of settling new land was mostly for young people who had no better sense than to try. Among adults, men often outnumbered women so substantially that the act of the Wyoming territorial legislature in granting women's suffrage in 1869 could appear to be a simple act of chivalry.

The settler on new land had first to select his claim with whatever imperfect knowledge he had of land and farming. He wanted some wooded land, for he needed wood for buildings, for fuel, for fences, and he wanted water. He also wanted to avoid wet lands from which came the mal-air, the true cause, he thought, of the chills and fever that racked the new settlers of the interior. He must make a shelter, clear land for a crop and plant it, and find food for himself and his family until harvest. If new settlers suffered no starving times to match those of early Virginia and Plymouth, their sparse and laconic annals show that hunger often sat with loneliness in the half-moon huts, the log cabins, the sod houses and the tar paper shacks of the westerers. These people often subsisted during their first year on wild game and fish, on roots and berries. Even the crow and the meadow lark went somtimes into the stewpot. But the way of the new settler, both in the north and the south, was enormously eased by Indian corn. This wonderful cereal returned to the husbandman, not the Biblical tenfold, expected by Europeans, but a hundredfold and more. It was acclimatized to American soil and most of its uses were quickly learned from the Indians. In the North there was cornmeal mush, corn bread and johnnycake; in the South corn bread, hominy and hominy grits; and before the 18th century had run out, corn provided whiskey for everybody who wanted it. Moreover, cattle and hogs could be fattened on corn.

The promise of unlimited land encouraged pioneers to expand westwards in great numbers. To insure protection against hostile Indians and the forces of nature, these pioneers banded together in protective wagon trains.

The millions of men, women and children who went onto the wild land performed Herculean labors to make farms. John Muir's autobiography pictures some of the backbreaking work required to make a farm in Wisconsin and Marie Sandoz's fictional biography of her father, *Old Jules*, permits us to see a Nebraska farm in the making. Where they found forest, these people cut and burned the trees and they sometimes grubbed out the stumps in their hurry to make fields on the land. In the Ohio country the great forests of oak, walnut, buckeye, elm, ash, sycamore, hickory, butternut, and many other trees spread from Pittsburgh to the prairies. One observer claimed that a squirrel could travel from Pittsburgh to Illinois without leaving the tree tops. The settlers cut these forests and burned them. One traveler in this country in the early 19th century reported that wherever he went he could smell woodsmoke during the burning season. If the lands were wet, the settler drained and ditched and diked. If the lands were dry, he built small and later vast irrigation works. If the land was strewn with boulders, the farm maker and his family gathered the stones from the fields on 'stone boats', dragged them to the fence row and there built the stone battlements that still record this endless toil. Droughts, hurricanes, floods, early and late frosts, dust storms, plagues of crickets, grasshoppers and locusts, low prices, small returns and Indian wars sometimes checked but never stopped this vast movement.

Indeed, the land seekers swarmed to the new land in such numbers that the federal machinery was nearly overwhelmed. The General Land Office, created in 1812 to manage the lands, seemed always in arrears. Land was conveyed by the government to the claimant by a land warrant—words written on parchment—and Congress had directed that the warrant be signed by the President of the United States. By the 1820's the number of warrants had so increased that the task of signing became a burden and one that no doubt contributed to the scrivener's palsy from which President John Quincy Adams (1825-29) suffered. Malcolm Rohrbough in his book, *The Land Office Business*, tells us that from December, 1830, until the next June, John Quincy Adam's successor, Andrew Jackson, had signed 10,000 land warrants, that he had another 10,000 to go, and that he was losing ground daily. The next year Congress took pity on the President and authorized appointment of a secretary to sign the President's name to land warrants. Thus necessity robbed this unique transaction of the real signature of the chief executive.

When the first food supply was assured, the farmer added other crops: wheat and other cereals, garden truck, hogs, poultry and other farm animals. The new settler was compelled to be largely self-subsistent during the first years and, if he occupied ill-favored lands such as the southern highlands, self-subsistent he might remain. But most settlers sought to produce something for sale as quickly and as extensively as their land, their skill, and emerging markets permitted. They tried to raise anything that would grow and their government instructed travelers and government agents abroad to send seeds and plants that might be useful to American farmers. Many were bold experiments. There are records of men seeking to produce exotic crops, including tea, silk, ginseng; in Southern California some tried to raise ostriches; in Oregon, llamas. This part of the story of new land settlement has been largely submerged by the farmer's spectacular success in producing corn, wheat, cotton, pork and beef. Even the knowledge of the enormous amount of trial and error in wheat raising attracts little attention, although James C. Malin tells the story for several Kansas counties in his book, *Winter Wheat*.

The vast productivity of the American land is reflected in the tall columns of census figures that report the annual production of cotton and wheat and corn and beef and hogs. It is also reflected in the story of the development and spread of a transportation system of roads and canals, river improvements and river steamboats and the spectacular spread of a railroad network. It is shown in the rise of great industries that manufactured the newly invented machines used for cultivation, planting, harvesting, and in the great industries that emerged to process the produce from the farm. The great fortune amassed by Cyrus Hall McCormick, inventor and manufacturer of reapers and other machines, mirrors dramatically the speed with which the self-subsistent settler became an enormously productive commercial farmer.

Englishmen and others who came to the colonies brought tools and seeds and livestock; they also brought their folkways, their ecclesiastical and secular beliefs. They shaped additional beliefs from their experience in occupying the new land—a process illuminated by Frank Kramer in his wonderful but too much neglected book, *Voices in the Valley: Myth Making and Folk Belief in the Shaping of the Middle West*. These beliefs and actions would serve to fuel and shape the vast movement of occupying the continent.

The colonials and their descendants believed that they had the duty to occupy the land and to make it fruitful, and hence the Indian must give way. Give way he did, slowly at first and then more rapidly as the numbers of whites increased, as their organization and firearms and accompanying technology improved.

Who Owns the Land?

Ideas of land ownership came, of course, with the first settlers. Although William Blackstone's *Commentaries* would not appear until the 1760's, he probably spoke views generally accepted by the American colonists as well as Englishmen. "There is nothing," he wrote in the opening paragraphs of his discourse on the Law of Things, "which so generally strikes the imagination and engages the affection of mankind, as the right of property; or that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe." So generally accepted was the notion of the right of property and the means by which that right was maintained that the question was seldom raised as to "why a set of words upon parchment should convey dominion of land; why a son should have a right to exclude his fellow creatures from a determinate spot of ground, because his father had done so before him." He concludes, "it is well if the mass of mankind will obey the laws when made, without scrutinizing too nicely into the reasons for making them."

In the English colonies, as in England, land ownership generally rested upon a system of feudal arrangements under which the original right to the land reposed in the crown. Thus the crown granted rights to individuals and companies under specified conditions and they in turn could dispose of the land within the limits of their grant. Thus throughout the colonies, whether charter, proprietary, or royal, land titles rested on a grant from the crown. The managers of the first colonies, Virginia and Plymouth, sought initially to retain in the company all right to the land, but neither corporate nor communal land settlement proved satisfactory. William Bradford, in his history of the Plymouth Plantation, devotes only a few words to the difficulties encountered under a system in which all persons produced for a common store and all were fed and clothed from that store regardless of individual capacity and industry. Bradford observed that each man sought to raise as much corn as possible, but to do this each wanted his own land. "At length, after much debate, ... the Governor ... gave way that they should set corn every man for his own particular, and in that regard trust themselves.... This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have thought great tyranny and oppression."

During the century and a half of English occupation that preceded the American Revolution, the different colonies developed different ways of distributing the land. New England devised the town system, Virginia granted the right to enter and hold land under a system of head rights and the resulting crazy quilt patterns are still obvious to the air traveler today. Other colonies developed other means of imposing patterns of ownership on the new land. But whatever the differences, all colonies had some things in common. Men wanted title to the land if they could get it; they wanted some arrangement under which words would be set on parchment to record ownership of a "determinate spot of ground"; some provided that monuments of fences mark land boundaries. Massachusetts early required periodic inspection of town boundary monuments by town officials. Most also sought to require the settler to make improvements in order to hold land.

But there were objections to the theory that title passed from crown to proprietor or colonial official and from him to the settler. Thomas Jefferson framed such objections in 1774 when he proposed that the Virginia delegation to the Continental Congress be instructed to take notice of "an error in the nature of our land holdings, which crept in at an early period of our settlement." Feudal tenures, he wrote, had been introduced into England by Normans and had altered but not obliterated Saxon usages. "Our Saxon ancestors held their lands, as they did their personal property, in absolute dominion, disencumbered with any superior answering nearly to the nature of those possessions which the Feudalist term Allodial." Jefferson then went on to argue a point of view that many a large landholder and speculators in western lands found distasteful. There was no basis, he insisted, for assuming that these feudal arrangements had been extended to the American land. Ownership should rest on occupation. "From the nature and purpose of civil institutions, all lands within the limits, which any particular party has circumscribed around itself, are assumed by that society, and subject to allotment; this may be done by themselves assembled collectively, or by their legislature, to whom they may have delegated sovereign authority; and, if they are allotted in neither of these ways, each individual of the society may appropriate to himself such lands as he finds vacant, and occupancy will give him title." Although the Virginia legislature did not approve, here were arguments that had already been heard in the western parts of Pennsylvania and in the Carolinas, and they would be heard again and again on the western frontiers in the 18th and throughout the 19th centuries. They would find expression in the miners' claim associations in the several pre-emption laws and in the Homestead Act of 1862. Indeed the theory of the prescriptive right of the first pre-emptor became almost gospel among the miners—except of course, it did not extend to the Indians.

The success of the Revolution and the cession of western land claims to the central government by the former colonies brought into existence the first public domain: the Northwest Territory which embraced the lands lying west of Pennsylvania and north of the Ohio River and extending west to the Mississippi. Subsequently, lands in the southwest and lands acquired by the Louisiana and Florida purchases, the Mexican cessions, and in the settlement of the Oregon boundary all became part of the public domain.

With the creation of the first Public Domain, the representatives of the thirteen states, now united under the Articles of Confederation, faced all of the problems of establishing a colonial policy for the west and fixing on the public domain a system of land surveys and determining the policies that would control the distribution of this land. They would be guided by their experience in their respective states, by such knowledge as they had of Blackstone and other legal authorities, and such social theories and expectations as they possessed.

An aerial photograph of Virginia shows demarcation lines of land ownership forming a crazy quilt pattern.

In the spring of 1785, with intruders already going onto the public land, the Congress, harrassed by the need for money, spent several months in arduous debate over who should have these lands and under what arrangements. On April 27, 1785, William Grayson, member from Virginia, wrote George Washington: "I think there has been as much said and wrote about it (the land law) as would fill forty Volumes, and yet we seem very far from a conclusion . . . " Grayson and others frequently despaired of getting any land law because of the conflict and confusion of interests, but the great Land Ordinance was adopted on May 20, 1785.

Although a bundle of compromises, the law of 1785 laid the foundation for the Federal land system. Among other things it provided for a system of rectangular surveys and outlined general and specific policies governing the disposition of the public lands. It provided that Indian title should be extinguished before the land was surveyed and the land must be surveyed before it could be disposed of. That portion to be sold must be offered at public auction with a minimum price established by Congress. This was intended to assure an open market and the proper price for land sold, but buyers at the land auction quickly found ways of managing the sales so that the minimum price became the highest price bid. One section in each township was reserved for the common schools and some land was to be reserved to pay land bonuses to soldiers and sailors who had served in the Revolutionary War. Some land was to be reserved for the federal government. Later additions to the law would provide land grants to support other beneficial purposes: a township or more was granted to endow a state university in each new state, and a large amount of land would be granted to assist construction of works of internal improvement, particularly railroads.

Although initially applied only to seven ranges immediately west of Pennsylvania, the rectangular survey—with provision for marking out land into townships six miles square, each to be subdivided into thirty-six sections, each one mile square and containing 640 acres, and each regularly numbered and capable of being further divided—laid the foundation for the land surveys that would spread the regularly patterned lines over the public lands all the way to the Pacific. With the later addition of principal meridians and base lines, a simple system of land description was developed that made it possible to identify "a determinate spot of ground" easily and quickly and surely. Any land seeker, any emigrant could master the system in a few minutes. Just as the air traveler over Virginia or Pennsylvania can see in the irregular patterns of the fields below him the results of a system of "hatchet claims"—the metes and bounds surveys—so he can also see in the lands spreading west from Ohio the checkerboard pattern imposed on the land by the rectangular survey.

Even in the western mountains the surveyors, ignoring geography and often personal safety, have plotted the straight lines on a wild, rugged landscape. In the clear-cutting by the lumber companies now harvesting timber high in the Cascade mountains, the straight lines of the sections often mark the edge of the cut, true to the probably unintended purposes of the men of 1785.

No one will ever know how much the straight lines of the rectangular surveys contributed to the public peace during the 19th century. Over five million farms were marked out on the public lands between 1800 and 1900. Had this been attempted under the loose and chaotic arrangements of the metes and bounds system,—the crazy quilt system of Virginia—interior America might have erupted in bloody land boundary disputes so violent and widespread as to make the Tennessee and Kentucky feuds seem minor local disturbances. Robert Frost has told us that good fences make good neighbors. He might also have told us that clean survey lines make for peaceful land settlement. Certainly those who look steadily at this vast and rapid occupation of the enormous resources of America, and who try to see it whole must wonder that an often polyglot and miscellaneous people could divide all of these rich resources so peacefully under the rules laid down by their government or by the numerous associations they helped to form. Of course there were some sneaky characters, some cheaters, and there was some bloody conflict, but the remarkable thing is that there was so little. Perhaps our vision of our past should picture a *mild* west, not the wild and lawless west so much doted on by romantic writers.

Use and Abuse in the Land

Moreover, the six mile square survey township, with expected road allotments around each section, and a ready-made register of land owners, offered a convenient and frequently used frame for local government—something encouraged by the one section grant in each township for the common schools. Within this area, transmitted into the civil township, taxes would be assessed and collected, roads built, elections held, common schools established and the federal census taken. The school house could become the meeting house for debates, recitals, political meetings, and even box sociables and dances which did much to determine the social and genetic inheritance of the next generation. Thus the survey township could be and often was akin to the manufactured honeycomb used by the beekeeper which, when inserted into the hive, provides the frame within which the bees organize their important work.

The farmers on the new lands were not only experimenters. Many sought to be improvers. In the 1780's and 1790's public-spirited men in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Massachusetts and elsewhere established agricultural societies dedicated to the improvement of farming. The Massachusetts Society offered to reward "men of enterprise who have, by their inquiries, made useful discoveries and communicated them to the public." All the societies urged that better plants and animals be imported and developed, that better methods of tillage and harvesting be found, and better machines be invented. George Washington, himself a successful farmer experimenter, urged Congress in 1796 to "encourage and assist a spirit of discovery and improvement" and to take steps so such information would be spread across the nation. Thomas Jefferson, who contributed significantly to the improvement of the plow, and who kept detailed and admirably complete farm records, when ex-President of the United States accepted the assignment to write the constitution for the Albemarle Agricultural Society. The document called for reports on all good and bad farm practices in the region with the expectation that "the choicest processes culled from every farm would compose a course probably near perfection."

De Tocqueville, in his travels in the United States in the 1830's, observed the widespread American belief in both the necessity and the inevitability of universal progress. Such beliefs were reflected in the constitutions of the agricultural societies and the humbler farmers' clubs that burgeoned across the country after the 1830's, and they served to justify the agricultural fairs and inform the farm journals that came into existence. Moreover, as early as 1794 it was urged in Pennsylvania that state funds be provided to promote the education of youth in agricultural pursuits. In the 1820's the Gardiner Lyceum, a short-lived private venture, dedicated itself to agricultural education. Other similar unsuccessful ventures were launched in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio and probably elsewhere, and request for state support continued. By 1860 the legislatures of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Iowa had adopted legislation aimed at bringing colleges of agriculture into existence, and there was agitation within Congress to provide a land grant to each of the states for such colleges. In 1862 Congress responded by adopting two measures, one established the Department of Agriculture within the Federal Government, the other, the first Morrill Act, provided a grant of land from the public domain to each state to endow a college of agriculture and mechanic arts.

It was one thing to grant land to endow a college of agriculture and mechanic arts. It was quite another to bring such an institution into existence, to find a course of study, employ a qualified faculty, to find students—in short—to decide what to do and how to do it. Initially there was much confusion and some of the managers of these new institutions sought to fulfill their mission by offering courses such as agricultural Greek and bucolic mathematics.

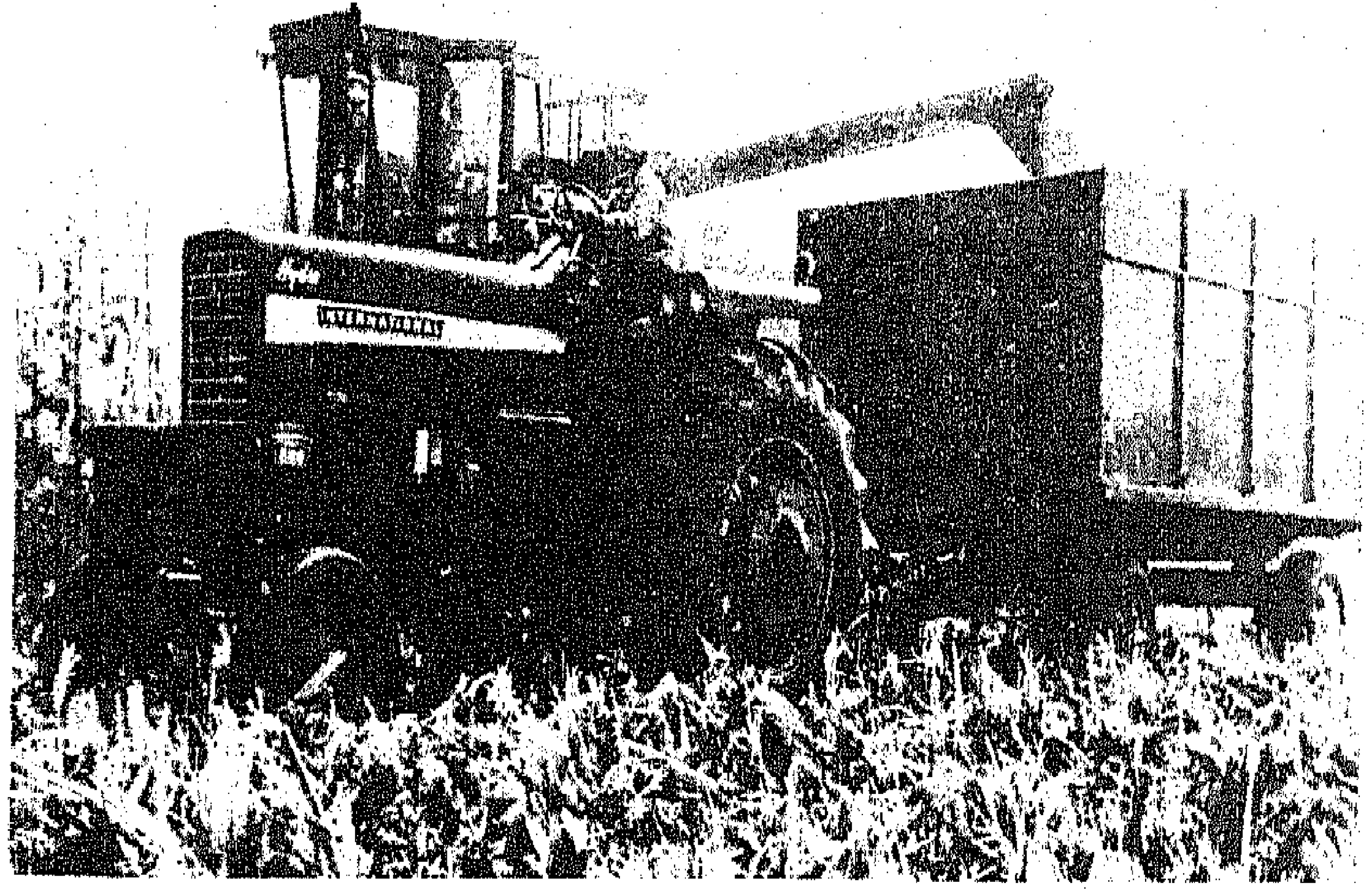
Yale College, along with other private colleges, sought and obtained Morrill Act funds and exhibited its spirit of accommodation to the needs of farmers' sons by permitting them to matriculate without passing examinations in Greek and Latin. The lesser languages of French and German were acceptable. Yale was not a successful agricultural college and angry farmers would, in the 1880's, bring pressure on the legislature to separate the Morrill funds from Yale to permit establishment of a separate college of agriculture. Elsewhere the masters of the new colleges, urged on by outspoken and often strident farmer constituents, began to call into existence the mechanisms that would respond to the plea of a midwestern farmer that the college "bring science down out of the sky and hook it to a plow." These mechanisms included farmers' institutes in which the professors of the agricultural colleges went out to talk to groups of farmers and the farmers talked back; they also included the agricultural experiment stations where scientists in several disciplines carried forward investigations to bring science and technology to the aid of the farmer. Thus farmers often posed the questions and helped shape the direction of investigation. In Wisconsin, a farmer's shrewd observation that the chemical analysis offered of animal feeds missed some vital element, led to sustained investigation of animal nutrition which in turn became an important step in the discovery of vitamins. Another dramatic example of the working of the system is seen in the account Karl Paul Link gave of the discovery of the anti-coagulant, Dicumarol. His investigations began when a farmer brought to the Wisconsin Experiment Station a dead heifer, a bucket of uncoagulated blood drawn from the dead animal, and some frozen green sweet clover, and demanded to know how they were connected. Link and his associates found the answer and named it Dicumarol.

The Congress in 1862 also created a Department of Agriculture which, among other things, was "to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of the word." The committee that introduced the bill offered its own eloquent statement about the good things that would flow from this new agency. "The cultivation of the earth was the first duty assigned to man, and it will of necessity be his latest work. When its culture shall have reached its highest point of perfection, under the guidance of science, art, and skill, man may hope to find the whole earth transformed into the beautiful garden he left in olden times." The committee went on to defend the participation of government in the improvement of agriculture and borrowed a sentence from *Gulliver's Travels* that soon became famous: "The man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is the benefactor of his race." This is a sentiment with which the Norwegian Parliament agreed when, in 1970, it bestowed the Nobel Peace Prize on Norman E. Borlaug for his part in bringing on the Green Revolution.

These developments were taking place during a period of explosive growth. In 1850 the first agricultural census was taken and nearly 1.5 million farms were counted. Fifty years later the number stood at 5.7 million, and in 1935, 6.8 million farms were reported, the largest number in the history of the Republic. Since then the number has declined steadily. The 1970 census reported a total of 2,730,250 farms, 1,031,638 reported cash sales of less than $2500 a year; an additional 748,347 reported sales of under $10,000 a year. Despite the steady decline in the number of farms, total farm acreage has increased slightly since 1935.

These changes were accompanied by often spectacular improvements of technology and the application of the new biological sciences to farming. The method of harvesting wheat can illustrate the technological improvements. In the 1830's the crude horse-drawn reaper promised to supplant the old scythe and cradle in the wheat harvest. The reaper became a binder in the 1870's with the application of the Appleby twine knotter. By 1900 the binder had been superseded in many wheat producing areas by the combine, which cut and threshed the wheat in a single operation. Some of these machines had cutting bars of from 12 to 20 feet in length and were drawn by 20 to 30 horses. In California a few wheat raisers boasted of gigantic machines with cutting bars up to 40 feet in length, the machines drawn by huge steam engines. By the 1920's the tractor began to supplant the horse in the grain fields and by the end of the 1940's the work horse had virtually disappeared. Gasoline, not hay and oats, supplied the energy on the farms.

The application of science to farming could be suggested by the work of certain scientists, drawn from several disciplines, who located the micro-organism that caused what had once been called Texas cattle fever but came to be called simply cattle fever. Working together they found that a cattle tick served as an indispensable intermediate host of the organism and thus discovered what was needed to be known to seek remedies. In the 20th century, as biologists and chemists and geneticists and other more specialized scientists and engineers brought their knowledge to the aid of the farmer, a host of new words entered the farmer's vocabulary—hybridization, heterosis, insecticide, herbicide and a great many others—and the quantity if not the quality of the flood of food and fiber increased apace. In the 1960's Rachel Carson, in her terrifying book,



Mrs. Herman Warsaw drives the tractor, working beside her husband in the fields of their 80-acre farm. This farm produced a record-breaking yield of corn (maize) in 1975.

Silent Spring, counted some of the costs and dangers that emerged from the gigantic success of hooking science to the plow.

American agriculture prospered mightily after the Civil War although many farmers did not. In 1900 the director of the federal census boasted that agricultural exports now equaled almost half of the total production of all American farms only fifty years before. But the successive farmer or farmer-related political movements—Granger, Greenback, Alliance and Populist in the 19th century, and the Farmers' Union, the Society of Equity, the Non-Partisan League, the National Farmers' Holiday Association, the National Farmers' Organization and a host of other movements of protest and despair in the 20th century—can serve as a barometer of farmer discontent in the ocean of plenty they had helped to create.

Nor was the land all turned into a garden. The great rush across the country left devastation in the wake of the farmers, the lumbermen, the miners. Some tobacco lands began to be exhausted and abandoned before the end of the 18th century, and cotton lands would also be abandoned when their fertility was used up. It did not matter. There were inexhaustible acres in the limitless west. These and other matters are set forth in Avery Craven's book, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606–1860*. Farms began to be abandoned in New England by the middle of the 19th century, thanks to the annual spring harvest of winter-raised boulders in the fields and the ever more intense competition from the richer lands to the west.

Lumberman and miner also scarred and laid waste the lands that they touched. In 1898, B. E. Fernow, director of the USDA forestry division, who had visited Northern Wisconsin, the heart of the once inexhaustible white pine forest of the Lake States, wrote: "Logging has been carried on in almost every town of this region, and over 8 million of the 17 million acres of forests are cutover lands, largely burned over and waste brush lands, and one-half of it as nearly desert as it can become in the climate of Wisconsin." In Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the coal mining country, mountains of mining waste betokened successful coal digging. In California and in other mountain states, miners had torn up the floors of beautiful valleys and pulled down hills and mountains in their search for precious metals, and in the process, destroyed the spawning beds of salmon. Fishermen might complain, but the Blackstonian creed stood against them: the man who owned the land could do with it what he wanted.

There were of course some attempts, in both rural and urban areas, to restrict some "socially undesirable" uses of the land. Land zoning, building codes and restrictive covenants were employed to this and other ends. Vernon Carstensen's short monograph, *Farms or Forests: evolution of a state land policy for northern Wisconsin, 1850–1932*, sketches the enormous amount of public and private effort involved in developing a simple rural land zoning ordinance in Wisconsin. But it was not until the 1930's, in the face of the Great Depression and severe drought accompanied by destructive dust storms that a sense of the enormity of land wastage finally touched the public consciousness.

During the 1920's the largely unmanageable farm surplus punished the farmers and dogged the politicians who attempted to find a solution to the tragedy of abundance. Virtually nothing had been accomplished before the stock market collapse of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression. Conditions of farmers continued to worsen. In 1933, the New Deal carried into law the first agricultural adjustment act which sought to deal with the glut of farm products by reducing the acreage of cotton, corn, wheat and other crops, either by not planting or by destroying what had been planted. In the face of a predicted surplus of 1.2 billion pounds of pork, a program was launched in August, 1933, to remove from the market 4 million pigs and one million sows scheduled to farrow in the fall ("pregnant mothers", the sentimental writers called them). The final report on this venture claimed that over 6 million light hogs were destroyed and over 200,000 sows were slaughtered and their meat distributed through welfare agencies. This great plow-up and the 'wanton' destruction of 'little pigs' was widely denounced and lamented for political, sentimental, and occasionally humane reasons. All pigs under one hundred pounds or so were destroyed, the carcasses sent to the rendering works on the fatuous claim that the meat was not usable . . . this in a country where roast young pig had wide literary if not actual culinary standing. There was an almost cosmic irony in this gigantic and nearly wholesale destruction of food and fiber while millions of persons nearby were ill-fed and ill-clad. This must have been the act of a very civilized people, since no primitive tribe would have served its economic institutions so well and its hungry people so badly.

The plague of farm surplus and the devastating economic depression were soon joined by drought and dust storms. The winter of 1933-34 had been dry in the wheat country of the Great Plains. There were high winds and local dust storms in April and then, early in May, the drought and the winds produced a mighty dust storm unmatched in human memory. From May 9 to 12 dust rode the northwest winds from Montana over the Dakotas to the Twin Cities, to Chicago, and on, in a constantly widening cloud, to touch as far south as Nashville, Tennessee, to blanket both New York and Washington, D. C., and then to lose itself out over the Atlantic Ocean. Dust was so heavy and thick that airplane flights from Chicago had to be cancelled, street lights were turned on at midday, and wheat prices advanced frantically in the then largely unsupervised grain market of Chicago, subject three decades earlier of Frank Norris's bitter novel, *The Pit*. The storm made front page headlines in the eastern newspapers. *The New York Times* credited the Associated Press with discovering that this one great dust storm carried away 300,000,000 tons of topsoil. That absurd figure would appear again and again in reference to the destruction wrought by the storm. In Washington, D. C., reports were incomplete because the Weather Bureau equipment designed to measure air-borne dust was not working that day, but it was reported that the dust seeped into the committee room where politicians were pondering the establishment of a national soil conservation program.

The great dust storm was only a prelude to the mounting dry cycle that created the 'dust bowl', wreaked immeasurable human tragedy and released new waves of westering people from both the northern and southern Great Plains. Their stories are told in part by John Steinbeck in *Grapes of Wrath* and by Lois P. Hudson in *The Bones of Plenty*. One dusted-out Kansas farmer wrote a melancholy book about his experiences and concluded that "with the exception of a few favored localities, the whole Great Plains region is already a desert that cannot be reclaimed through the plans and labors of Man." P. B. Sears' book *Deserts on the March*, published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1935, unexpectedly became a best seller. The USDA sponsored production of the documentary film, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, enjoyed remarkable popularity from 1937 until 1939 when it was withdrawn from circulation because of objections by Congressman Karl Mundt of South Dakota. It was released in 1961 "to be used for study as an art form only."

The Sprawling City

Since the 1930's much has happened. The population of the United States has increased from 132 million in 1940 to 203 million in 1970. With the vast increase in farm mechanization, population has increasingly crowded into the urban centers. Thanks to the widespread use of cotton picking machines and related improvements, the southern sharecropper, cause of much grave concern in the 1930's, has largely disappeared. But hundreds of thousands of share croppers and their families who escaped the bondage of cotton have migrated to northern cities, many to populate

Scientific aids, mechanization and labor-saving devices enable this happy Iowa farmer to work a large farm without hiring outside help. Twenty percent of the maize produced in the U.S. is grown in Iowa.

the spreading ghettoes. Thanks to the automobile, the hard surfaced all-weather roads that have spread out from cities and towns, (the invention of the gasoline tax in the early 1920's placed a tithe on all automobile gasoline. This provided a constant and growing harvest of money that made these roads possible), rural electrification, and a host of other related developments, the post-war years saw the once sharp edges of town and city become frayed and then disappear entirely in the urban sprawl. The sprawl has sometimes been light, sometimes heavy as in Southern California where thousands upon thousands of acres of magnificent citrus groves and other farm lands have yielded to the outward march of the home builder, the tract developer, the shopping center. Great tollways and interstate super-highways have laced the land. Highway engineers, armed with almost limitless gas tax money and the right of eminent domain, have designed and built these great roads generally within the narrow imperatives of engineering values. If the road, with its landscaping, took all of the arable land in a narrow, level, and fertile valley, or if it crippled a working farm by driving through its heart the great barrier of a super-highway that was often of little concern. Engineering and design necessities were served and the farmer was paid for his land.

And miners continued to improve in their digging and their underground working. Early in the 20th century strip mining, a vastly improved way of obtaining coal lying near the surface of the ground, began to be employed. Before the end of the 1920's engineers and mine owners had built the first of the great earth clawing monsters capable of removing increasingly thick layers of overburden from the precious coal seams. The machines have continued to grow and multiply and today it is clear that through their use the enormous energy needs of the nation can be served, but vast areas of Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas may join the wastelands already created in Ohio and Appalachia.

Meanwhile, the cost of underground mining, particularly in coal mining areas, has increasingly been observed in the collapse of the earth's surface above the mines. Such collapse is called *subsidence*, no doubt partly to quiet irrational fears. *The New York Times* on September 27, 1969, reported a "working paper" of the Bureau of Mines that identified areas containing approximately 2 million acres of land that have experienced subsidence and another million that might be expected to suffer some collapse by the year 2000. Meanwhile, the USDA has estimated that the country has been losing 1.4 million acres a year of good farm land to highways, reservoirs, strip mining, urban development, and other uses.

In all of these melancholy developments—whether the urban sprawl, the routing of great highways, the tactics of the real estate developers, the undermining by the underground miners, the annihilation of the earth's surface by the strip miners—those who sell and those who buy and those who use the land as they please are too much shielded by the Blackstonian creed that the owner of land possesses complete and despotic dominion of his determinate spot of ground. The law and most of the institutional mechanisms within which they work have been too much conditioned by three centuries of unblemished faith in the inexhaustible resources of the American land. The users have been further protected by the certain knowledge that their society will clamor for the coal, or the roads, or the houses, or the shopping centers, but that society has not yet found a completely adequate legal or other means to restrain and temper, in a fair and rational way, man's avarice, his passion to serve, and his lust to improve. In the circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that we have taken so long to make the first timid demands for environmental and other studies before great earth disturbing works are launched. The English experience may be instructive. Nearly two centuries ago England started down the path that would create the Black country with its mountains of mine waste and wide areas of bleak and ugly wilderness. Not until 1947 did the English Parliament adopt the fairly comprehensive Town and County Planning acts which in effect deny English property owners the right to pave or shingle or otherwise dispose of their land at will. It took nearly a century of discussion to bring Parliament to that point in a country which, although it honored Blackstone, never lived under the illusion that its lands and resources were limitless.

In 1784 Dr. J. D. Schoepf, a German visitor to the newly born United States, was astonished,—perhaps appalled—to learn that whoever holds new land "controls it as his exclusive possession, with everything on it, above it, and under it." He could only conclude that in the United States "experience and necessity must here take the place of magisterial provision." As yet experience, necessity, good judgment and good will have been too little employed in arriving at decisions as to how the land is used. Much remains to be done if socially responsible and sensitive mechanisms are to be called into existence so that Blackstone will not only be undermined but actually overthrown in the interest of the people who must live on the land.

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Suggestions for Further Reading

B. H. Hibbard, *A History of Public Land Policies* (Macmillan, 1924. University of Wisconsin Press, paperback). **Roy M. Robbins.** *Our Landed Heritage; The Public Domain 1776–1936.* (Princeton University Press, 1942. University of Nebraska Press, paperback). Both are general books dealing with the history of the management and distribution of the public lands of the United States.

V. Carstensen, ed., *The Public Lands: Studies in the History of the Public Domain* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1963, paperback). A useful and representative collection of articles by a number of scholars dealing with aspects of public domain.

Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of the American Public Lands, 1789–1837* (Oxford University Press, 1968, paperback). An engaging and indispensable book for understanding the unfolding problems encountered by bureaucrats in the management and distribution of the public lands up to 1837.

ND/B/M **Wayne Rasmussen,** *Readings in the History of American Agriculture* (University of Illinois Press, 1960). Provides interesting glimpses of the American agricultural history.

C/AUC **Paul Wallace Gates,** *The Farmer's Age; Agriculture, 1815–1860* (Holt Rinehart, 1960, paperback). **Fred A. Shannon,** *Farmers' Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860–1897,* (same publisher, 1945). Both survey the main lines of agricultural development during the 19th century.

ND/M **John D. Hicks,** *The Populists Revolt* (University of Minnesota Press, 1932, paperback, University of Nebraska Press). The book offers an excellent account of this complex farmer's movement of protest and reform.

V. Carstensen, *Farmer Discontent, 1865–1900* (Wiley, 1974, paperback). A useful study in the post Civil War period of American agricultural movement.

John D. Hicks and **Theodore Saloutos,** *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900–1939* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1951, University of Nebraska Press, paperback). The book carries the story well into the 20th century.

John L. Shover, *Cornbelt Rebellion: The Farmers' Holiday Association,* (University of Illinois Press, 1965) and **D. E. Conrad,** *The Forgotten Farmers: The Story of the Sharecroppers in the New Deal* (same publisher, 1965). Both offer special studies of farmer distress and attempted revolt during the drought and depression years.

ND **Walter J. Hickel,** *Who Owns America,* (Prentice-Hall, 1971). Provides candid comment on the pressures that came to bear on the managers of America's national resources.

Daniel R. Mandelker, *Green Belts and Urban Growth: English Town and County Planning in Action* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1962). Provides an introduction to the historical accounts of attempts to impose controls on use and abuse of the land.

ND/B **Richard F. Babcock,** *The Zoning Game,* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1966). Babcock offers serious comment on the processes and problems of land use planning and control.

"CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS"

by PAUL L. MURPHY

Our Heritage of Rights

Unalienable rights have an honorable history in America. Their history is a central theme in the development of the American people. One of the things that Englishmen coming to the new world insisted upon at the outset was a firm assurance that their rights, as Englishmen, came with them, and in the First Charter of Virginia in 1606, assurance was given that: "every Person . . . which shall dwell and inhabit within every or any of the said several Colonies and Plantations, and every of their children, which shall happen to be born within any of the Limits and precincts of the said several Colonies and Plantations, shall HAVE and enjoy all Liberties, Franchises, and Immunities, within any of our other Dominions, to all Intents and Purposes, as if they had been abiding and born, within this our Realm of *England*, or any other of our said Dominions . . ."

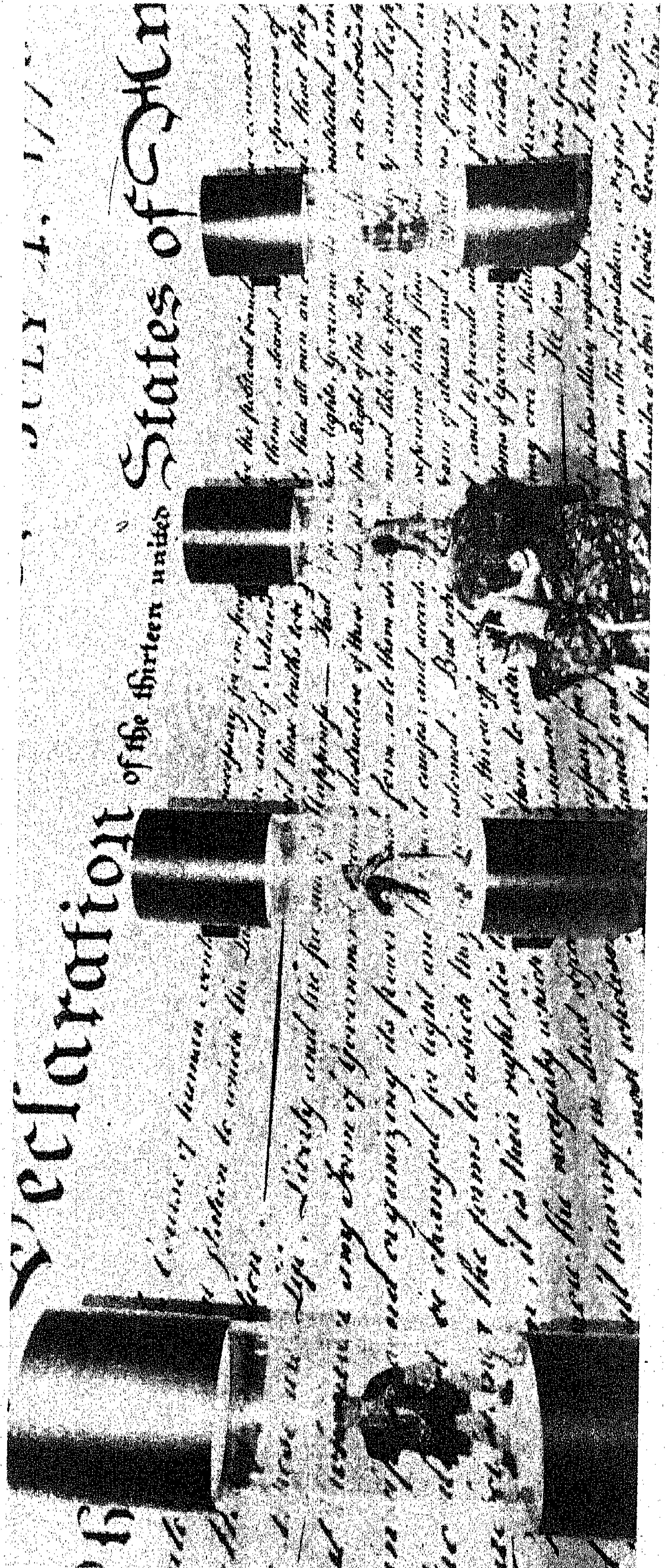
Certainly those who settled Massachusetts Bay were fleeing from a type of Royal tyranny which they found threatening to their rights, rights earlier asserted in the Magna Carta, but further specified in the English Petition of Rights, issued by the Parliament in 1628, on the eve of the New England migration to the new world. But the leaders of the Bay Colony, while fleeing English orthodoxy, were quick to set up an orthodoxy of their own. John Winthrop's "Little Speech On Liberty," set

forth the justification for that orthodoxy. In it, Winthrop clearly revealed his perception of two traditions which have prevailed through much of the American experience regarding the permissible limits of personal freedom in America. Rights did not mean the right to do evil, or to injure another. Rights were part of an ordered liberty, whereby one utilized his or her freedom within the framework of organized society, balancing personal rights against social responsibility, with the leaders of that society to monitor that process. And to Winthrop, that meant "liberty exercised in a way of subjection to authority," that authority representing the authority of Christ.

But to some this was too limited a view of personal freedom, and smacked too much of liberty simply to conform. To a maverick, such as Roger Williams, who had a greater faith in man's ability to manage his freedom, a broader justification for freedom existed, rooted in a broader view of the proper basis of authority, i.e., a semi-democratic social contract between the people and their governors. And this freedom Williams also saw including freedom of religion and religious conscience. As the colonial period progressed, and as royal government in America also talked more in terms of prerogative than in terms of rights, others looked for ways to recast the premises underlying the people's claim to rights and liberties. In a famous case in 1732, involving an attempt by a royal official in New York to silence criticism of him by a hostile editor, a plea was made that while in England, such criticism would, indeed, be punishable, "America must have her own laws." "Here," said the American attorney Andrew Hamilton, "the issue is not simply one of a poor printer. The cause is liberty . . . the liberty both of exposing and opposing arbitrary power by speaking and writing the truth."

Less than thirty years later, the poor printer, John Peter Zenger, was joined in the eyes of many Americans by a further champion of their unalienable rights, the Boston lawyer, James Otis, who, in denouncing the practice of British officers engaging in blanket searches of people's homes, argued vigorously that the right against unreasonable search and seizure was guaranteed both by "reason" and "the constitution." Some years later, our second President, John Adams, looking back on Otis's denunciation of Royal tyranny, observed that "then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain. Then, and there, the child, Independence, was born."

Between this call of Otis's for the "rooting of rights in fundamental principles of law" and the Declaration of Independence, the American mind underwent an important process. Clearly, to American leaders, the British claim that Americans' rights as Englishmen were guaranteed by the crown, and by the English constitution was no longer convincing,



particularly as further violations of American rights occurred, with everything from meetings to legislative assemblies broken up or dissolved. Thus, in the Declaration of Independence, Americans sought a different basis for maintaining the rights which they felt so fundamental—speech, press, assembly, freedom of religion, the right against unreasonable search and seizure, due process of law. The more they thought about the basis of these rights, the more they realized that these were rights which should and did belong to mankind generally. These were natural rights, God given rights, and by that token, rights which were unalienable, which government could not abrogate. And in the years from that Declaration to the ratification of an explicit Bill of Rights to the American Constitution in 1791, American leaders, from Madison and Jefferson, to state figures in every one of the 13 former colonies, worked to evolve formal ways of seeing to it that machinery was erected to keep those rights unalienable.

Thus, in some ways, the United States was born out of a struggle over unalienable rights, and the first agenda item of national leaders, after July 4, 1776, was "to secure those rights," by "instituting governments among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." And certainly Jefferson was pleased with the result. Two years before his death on July 4, 1826, he wrote: "nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man."

Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Religion

A central theme in American history is the freedom and dignity of the individual. Implicit in the values surrounding that theme are a number of assumptions and implications. The free individual has a right to express himself. And since, presumably, the United States has a government of the people, the oral views of the citizenry have a relationship to successful self government. Unlike England, where the King was law, in America, as Thomas Paine once stated, "The law is king." But the law started with the Constitution, and the Constitution was a product of "we, the people." And for "we, the people" to govern ourselves, it was assumed that a "healthy respect for the opinions of mankind" be acknowledged in the process of arriving at decisions on important matters.

Initially the right of peaceful assembly derived from a slightly different

The Declaration of Independence spelt out for that generation, and those to come, the validity of the nation and its citizens to be free.

The Civil Rights March of 1968 in Washington was indicative of the Freedom of Assembly in a peaceful protest.

concept. That right for nearly a century was linked to the right of petition, as if the First Amendment read: "The right of the people peaceable to assemble" (in order to petition the government). Functionally freedom of assembly stemmed from the feeling that in a day before mass media, when collective opinions were not easy to project to government officials, the people should be encouraged to get together in meetings and draw up petitions to fulfill that role. Over time, however, the right of peaceable assembly came to be related more to free speech. In order for a speaker to make his words effective he had to have an audience. And in order for an organization or a group to better make up its collective mind, it was useful to have speakers exploring various sides of issues before them. The peaceful exchange of ideas and opinions in the New England town meetings exemplify the American tradition of individual liberty in service to the community. In fact, it was the assertion of a Boston Town-meeting of November 20, 1772, that "the great end of civil government . . . is for the support, protection and defense of natural rights . . . now being imperilled," which launched the famed Committee of Correspondence of the Revolution era.

But speech, like assembly has always been viewed as a right or liberty which must be balanced against the public safety and the security of the state. "The most stringent protection of free speech," once wrote Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., "would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing panic." Hostility to the assembling of groups with the intent to formulate programs for assaulting others, or denying the rights of others, is also a part of the American tradition of protecting the rights of the minority. Thus, when the Ku Klux Klan, of the post-Civil War years held cross burnings, and encouraged such gatherings to assault Black citizens, Congress passed Anti-Klan Enforcement Acts censuring inflammatory speech which advocated violence or criminal actions and outlawing meetings held to act upon such oral exhortation.

Yet measuring the potential danger of speech, and the potential danger of assembly is no easy task. What of a meeting whose purpose is criminal and destructive but which seeks legitimate ends? What of a labor meeting, for example, where workers are urged to strike and picket as a way of demanding a greater share of the profits of the company, better working conditions and more of a hand in the management and policies of the company? There is no doubt that such action could be inconvenient, if not injurious to the business involved. But is it sufficiently injurious to the public interest generally to warrant curtailment of the rights of free speech and free assembly? Certainly police in the late 19th century, and oftentime state militia were called out to repress the striking and picketing so inspired, on the grounds that what had resulted was indeed dangerous to public order. And when public officials would not use such public agencies in this way, businesses frequently turned to private detectives, and private police forces to achieve the same end.

Yet to working class people, often brutally exploited by the huge, generally unregulated, corporations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was nothing criminal in asking for, and gathering to demand, better working conditions, better hours, and better pay. In what way did this threaten the public safety, or national security? Why, if businessmen could get together, in meetings, and listen to speakers explaining to them ways in which "radicals" could be stopped, and successful union organization prevented, did workers not have the same basic rights to use speech assembly in their own self interest? Here the decade of the 1920's was particularly pertinent. Strikes in steel, coal, textiles, and on the railroads were vigorously broken by governmental repression or company power, through the devise of disrupting workers meetings, arresting militant speakers, and generally undermining any moves toward industrial unionism. Yet the unfairness of this double standard led many sensitive Americans to seek legislative action to equalize access to freedom of speech and assembly. And the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 guaranteed workers both freedom of speech and assembly as legitimate devices "to promote their interests in a labor dispute."

This dilemma, of unequal access to basic freedoms, reappears throughout American history in many different forms. Abolitionist speakers were frequently chased from platforms for inveighing against the immorality of slavery. While in other parts of the country, pro-slavery advocates frequently were subjected to the same treatment. During World War I, critics of the war, and its conduct, from Socialists, and members of the agrarian Non-Partisan League, to pacifists, and German-Americans, found that their opinions, particularly when expressed orally, frequently led to their indictment under a federal sedition law or a state criminal syndicalist law, for impeding the nation's war efforts. Yet a cry from a conservative business leader that "we should hog-tie every disloyal German-American, feed every pacifist raw meat, and hang every traitor to a lamp post," was viewed sympathetically, by some, as patriotic hyperbole.

But this inconsistency of protecting incendiary speech, while denying it to others, troubled many Americans even then. By the 1930's, the Supreme Court recognized that there had to be remedies afforded citizens —federal remedies when state remedies were not adequate—by which Americans could gain protection from local citizens, who would impede their rights to free speech and freedom of assembly, either through formal legal, or informal and extra-legal actions. Clearly, by the late 1930's, the holding of meetings for peaceable political action gained new formal protection. And those who assisted in the conduct of such meetings could no longer, ruled the Supreme Court, be branded as criminals solely on that score. The remaining question about meetings and speeches at them, was not under whose auspices such meetings were held, but their purpose. Only if it was clear that the purpose was to stimulate action which was either criminal or potentially seriously threatening to the public safety or the public interest, were there grounds for curtailing them.

Many Americans question the utility of speech and assembly in a complex, modern, mass society. What impact can a speaker have, or can an assembly of people have, on public policies affecting their lives, and the life of the nation? Few Americans are naive enough to feel that we can simply talk our way into better government. But few Americans, on the other hand would deny that free speech has a kind of a utility. Without it, society would stagnate. Clearly Americans are not so foolish as to think that merely out of vigorous public discussion, an electric mixer effect will be produced, whereby truth will rise to the top. We are controlled too much by the media in what we know about public issues, and in recent years, especially, government classification policies further limit our knowledge. There are too many questions on which to be knowledgeable, so that even the best intentioned American's head swims in attempting to communicate sensibly on many of them. Further, too many people who speak never listen. They are so intent on "selling" their own point of view that no amount of speech refuting it, no matter how effectively presented can change their mind. Yet doubts sown by speech may, cumulatively, over time, alter opinions. And as speech proceeds, and peoples doubts are raised by it, they may pause to reconsider their positions. Few Americans would now deny that critics of our Viet Nam policy pointed out serious and fatal flaws in that policy, and ultimately forced government leaders to rethink that policy. Just as over 160 years earlier, critics of the government's belligerent policies toward France in 1798 and 1799, led President John Adams to disengage the country from hostilities with that nation, and led other thoughtful Americans to urge new and permissible limits of legitimate criticism of the government.

Thus, speech pointing out problems, expressing grievances, and criticizing public policy may be rebutted, and those expressing it may be condemned and rejected, but if the criticism is correct, it may well move others to start seeking needed remedies and changes. Certainly strong evidence exists, through American history, that silencing the agitator is counter-productive. While it may make Americans more comfortable not to be continually reminded of their shortcomings and the nation's shortcomings, repression of speech is essentially undemocratic, since it deprives the people of what frequently turns out to be the essential warning needed to begin coping seriously with problems.

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson urged that when the Government "becomes destructive" of men's rights, "it is the Right of the People to alter it, or abolish it and institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its power in such forms as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." This proclamation of a right of revolution, Jefferson viewed as a last-ditch remedy. With the people able to assemble and speak, and thereby keep their government responsible and accountable, the need for revolution disappears. Other Americans, throughout our history have reaffirmed Jefferson's position.

> *No matter whose the lips that would speak, they must be free and ungagged. The community which dares not protect its humblest and most hated member in the free utterance of his opinions, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves.*
>
> Wendell Phillips

> *I believe that the weakness of the American character is that there are so few growlers and kickers among us. We have forgotten the very principles of our origin, if we have forgotten how to object, how to resist,*

how to agitate, how to pull down and build up, even to the extent of revolutionary practices, if it be necessary to readjust matters.
Woodrow Wilson

Freedom of religion has fewer social overtones than freedom of speech and assembly; it is in essence an individual freedom concerned more nearly with personal conscience and private belief. Again, fundamental values emerge—freedom of conscience, freedom from having the state set forth an official orthodoxy regarding people's religious views, and religious behavior—freedom, in other words, to worship as one pleases, to exercise one's religion in ways most personally fulfilling.

But there are two religion clauses at the beginning of the First Amendment. The "separation of church and state" issue speaks to the further dimension of an established religion—a concept which early Americans all too often associated with being taxed to support a church to whose doctrines they did not subscribe, or being forced to engage in religious behavior contrary to their individual will. Again, Thomas Jefferson may have said it best. In the Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty in 1786, he denounced "the impious presumption of legislators and rulers to assume dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible ones;" arguing further that "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical." And listen to Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson, 157 years later, in defending Jehovah's Witness children's rights not to salute the flag against their religious conscience: "If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein."

But does this mean government hostility to religion? Does "building a wall of separation between church and state," mean departing from any principle of government neutrality toward religion, and embracing a position of government opposition toward it? Such questions were asked with growing frequency as the Supreme Court in the 1960's ruled against religious instruction in public school classrooms on a released time basis, prayer and Bible reading ceremonies in the public schools, and various forms of tax support for activities in private parochial schools in various parts of the country. "No!" wrote Justice Douglas. And in his opinions in various of the church-state issues he attempted to draw what he felt was a logical distinction. "We are a religious people," stated the Justice in 1952, "whose institutions presume a supreme being." And certainly to the Justice there was nothing unconstitutional about the national motto, "In God We Trust." But, he wrote ten years later, "that fact does not mean that the state should be involved in supporting public religion." There was an important difference between governmentally sponsored religious exercises, and the government protecting people's private religious rights, or even supporting objective teaching of courses on religion in tax supported classrooms, both of which he supported fully.

Religious freedom then is also an issue which must be viewed by those who seek to affect public policy as a balance between individual freedom and social responsibility. This is a fundamental and continuing issue. In our times the dimensions of the controversy have drawn Americans of good will into a reassessment of the relationship between public policy and religious conviction. Contending parties claim that their point of view will best preserve freedom of religion in its pristine form. As long as this controversy is waged democratically in the public forum, the prospect of a just resolution is assured.

Freedom of the Press

Historically, Americans have believed that knowledge was essential to freedom and to a democratic society. To expect to be ignorant and free was, as Jefferson put it, "to expect what never was, and never will be." To expect uninformed citizens to govern themselves was folly, and to expect ignorant people to be able to protect their own rights was to deny the laws of reason.

Freedom of the Press thus represents an unalienable right, but a right really more social than individual—a right to be informed honestly in order that collective wisdom can be mustered in such a way that people can govern themselves intelligently. Here the relationship of freedom of the press to democracy is crucial. In 18th century England, where it was felt that the crown had the responsibility for insuring the welfare of the people, it was widely agreed that the press should be regulated so as to insure the success of royal policy. Early American leaders, after tasting the bite of royal arbitrariness, began looking for ways to limit the sovereignty of the crown, and argued that such sovereignty was limited by the rights of man as determined by natural law. Under this theory freedom of the press became one of the natural rights of man incapable of infringement by any man-made power. According to this position, government could not restrict the right to speak or print, even to save itself from destruction. And this theory became the generally adopted principle of operation in America by the opening years of the 19th century.

But the factor of responsibility was also involved here. If the citizen has the responsibility to inform himself or herself on the merits of current issues, and on the qualifications of candidates for public office, the press has the responsibility, as do other media of mass communication, of informing the citizen and making available to him such materials as will enable him to arrive at sound and rational conclusions on public affairs. However, the issue goes one step further than this. What if the press does not accept that responsibility? What if it does not fulfill its obligation of furnishing the citizen with full, complete, and accurate information and interpretation. What if, on the contrary, it uses its power to inform in such a way as to mislead or confuse? What redress do the people have? What are the responsibilities of the people and their government in this area? Again, the permissible limits of freedom became an issue for the people and their leaders to confront.

The variation in press freedom issues, from the days of John Peter Zenger, and the question of whether truth should be a defense in a libel action, to the days of Daniel Ellsberg, and whether government can stop the *New York Times* from printing the Pentagon Papers, has been far greater than in the free speech and free assembly area. Press law has reflected the changing challenges, and changing perceptions of the degree of threat which varying kinds of public information, or strong editorial opinion, pose. To the old Federalist Party of the late 1790's, written criticism of the government, during an international crisis and period of undeclared war with France, was, in itself, dangerous, and Anti-Federalist newspaper editors served jail terms, when they attempted to challenge that policy. By the 1830's and 1840's, with the issue of slavery heading up, this took a different dimension. To Northern abolitionists, slavery was a sin, and the press was an instrument for exposing that sin. Thus Elijah Lovejoy, in southern Illinois, not only stood firm against angry mobs, threatening to destroy his printing establishment, he maintained his "right and moral duty" to deplore and attack slavery in print, a stand which eventually led to his losing his life when a mob, irate at his editorial views, took justice into its own hands. But to pro-slavery forces, irresponsible printed attacks on the institution of slavery constituted an unwarranted attack on people's private property, and upon an accepted social system. Much of the South approved when President Andrew Jackson sought to obtain legislation keeping abolitionist material out of the mail. But this angered northerners, who now added to their assault upon slavery, the further accusation that the South's civilization was one built upon the denial of unalienable rights, such as freedom of the press. If such a system became the dominant one in America, the unalienable rights of all Americans would be put in peril.

Americans may choose from a diverse selection of newspapers and magazines.

Abraham Lincoln, in some ways, inherited this conflict in the form of a civil war. But then he promptly found that the issue had war-time implications, previously unforeseen. For the first time in American history, the security of the entire nation depended upon proper kinds of information, as well as proper kinds of attitudes toward that information. Many Lincoln advisors urged that this surely justified careful management of the news. Thus the balancing of an unalienable right and freedom, against national security, created a serious public dilemma. But the press was also disturbed by the practice of military commanders' refusal to talk with reporters, and the use of martial law to suppress newspapers themselves. This issue emerged when a grand jury in New York called for the closing down of a New York City paper, the *Journal of Commerce*, for its "vicious criticism of the President and the northern war effort." Lincoln's attempted resolution of these questions amounted, ultimately to a rapping of the knuckles of the press, a lecture that such a privilege as freedom of the press carried with it serious responsibilities for accuracy, honesty, and care in the handling of public information, and a strong call for voluntary self-censorship of material clearly threatening to the national interest.

Later Presidents were neither so tolerant, nor so benign. Theodore Roosevelt, angered by charges in newspapers that there was deep federal corruption involved in the purchase of the title to the Panama Canal from France, directed his Attorney General to bring a libel suit against these newspapers. But a Congressional committee then entered the picture, and after an investigation, reported that there were many legitimate doubts unclarified with respect to the propriety of that purchase. This, in turn, led a federal judge to maintain his serious doubt that such newspaper statements were libelous:

> *... a newspaper has a certain duty to perform ... to print the news and tell the turth about it. It is the duty of a public newspaper ... to tell the people ... the facts it may find out about public questions, or matters of public interest; and it is its duty and its right to draw inferences from the facts known—draw them for the people, as not everybody can draw an inference.*

The outcome was an important working precedent, largely foreclosing the use by the federal government of libel charges to suppress legitimate criticism of its actions.

Woodrow Wilson, by contrast, in 1918, signed a sharply restrictive Sedition Act, making criminally punishable the "printing, writing, or publishing of any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States." During the First World War, George Creel, a former public relations man, became head of the Committee on Public Information, empowered to direct newspapers not only by the type of releases they might make, but by the type of material they might distribute. But again Americans were uneasy. Censorship of public information always carries with it the threat and suspicion that officials may use that power to cover up their own wrongdoings, their own mistakes, or their own errors of judgment.

With the end of the war, the wartime legislation became inoperative, not to be renewed until the eve of World War II. Franklin Roosevelt, however, went out of his way to instruct Justice Department officials to enforce it with the highest level of sensitivity, and concern for people's right to know.

But a free press can be abusive. A free press can embarrass public officials. And a free press, when it takes the form of "yellow journalism" can invade privacy, damage reputations, and even interfere with justice. A Minneapolis scandal sheet, strongly anti-Semitic in its editorial slant, so aroused public officials by its barrage of hostile criticism, that they closed it down. The Supreme Court reversed the action, insisting that the solution to such abuse was in private libel action against the newspaper, and not in suppression or prior censorship. Wrote Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes: "... the administration of government has become more complex, the opportunities for malfeasance and corruption have multiplied, crime has grown to most serious proportions, and the danger of its protection by unfaithful officials and of the impairment of the fundamental security of life and property by criminal alliances and official neglect, emphasizes the primary need of a vigilant and courageous press, especially in great cities. The fact that the liberty of the press may be abused by miscreant purveyors of scandal does not make any the less necessary the immunity of the press from previous restraint in dealing with official misconduct."

The urban press in Louisiana launched a bitter campaign against Governor Huey Long, charging him with dictatorship, corruption, and general abuse of power. When Long sought to tax the urban press out of business, the Supreme Court deplored the action as a classical threat to press freedom, with the government "unjustifiably seeking to prevent such free and general discussion of public matters as seem absolutely essential to prepare the people for an intelligent exercise of their rights as citizens."

Newspapers in the 1940's, and increasingly in the 1950's and 1960's proclaimed it was the public's right to know all of the details involving major crimes, even prior to trial. Some went so far as to "try" unpopular defendants in their editorial columns, prior to a proper judicial proceeding. The various cases raised the issue then of whether the public's right to know, and have access to different views on a public question, was a more vital right than a defendant's claim to fair and impartial justice in the courtroom. The controversy focused on the question of which unalienable rights are more important, and who, ultimately, should make that decision, the newspaper editor, or the judge.

Militant civil rights groups in the 1960's took ads in newspapers both to publicize their cause, and to deplore the behavior of their opponents. One such ad in the *New York Times*, in emotionally seeking support, distorted the truth regarding specific forms of southern repression. A libel action was filed by an Alabama official claiming that although he was not specifically mentioned in the ad, his reputation suffered as a result of it. "Criticism of public officials," ruled the Supreme Court in rejecting his claim, "is not only justified, but is essential in a democratic society.

Impersonal criticism of government is to be encouraged, not merely in the interests of free speech, but in the interests of checking governmental power over the people and of maintaining a democratic society. There can be no libel on government, and no punishment for seditious libel." And Justice William Brennan went on, noting that "in a democratic society debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and ... may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials."

In the 1960's, the public behavior of a wide range of citizens, from anti-war protesters and draft evaders, militant Black Panthers, S.D.S. leaders, to say nothing of people involved in the drug culture, troubled millions of Americans. Information was lacking, and the public wanted to know what was really going on, and what was behind this dislocation, and revolutionary turmoil on all sides. Reporters, seeking stories, found the principals reluctant to afford them information without some guarantee of anonymity. The government, on the other hand, recognized the opportunity of using these sources in the apprehension of people whom they were seeking, and being called upon by the general public to arrest and punish. Reporters, caught in the middle, knew that if they revealed their sources, the sources would promptly dry up, and if the sources dried up, further information would cease. Thus they tended to defy government demands for their testimony. Again a further dimension of the "responsibility" of newspapers and reporters—to the government, or to the press and the people—was raised.

In 1670, Governor William Berkeley of Virginia remarked, with a sigh of relief:

> *I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best governments. God Keep Us From Both!*

Criticism of the press continues today; some believe that the press, in publicizing the activities of civil rights demonstrators, discontented students, and anti-war protesters, encouraged a disregard for public order and social stability. Yet a growing number of Americans realize that a free and responsible press is also a major safeguard against governmental corruption and social inequality. In a free society an uncensored press can expose the problems which some people may wish to ignore, but which must be faced if we as a nation are to realize the promise of a just and humane society.

Freedom From Search and Seizure

"The right to be let alone is, indeed, the beginning of all freedom," once wrote Justice William O. Douglas. And this concept, freedom from the long arm of government, embodies a variety of fundamental American values, again, deeply rooted in our English and Revolutionary past. At about the time James Otis, the Boston lawyer, was deploring English writs of assistance, authorizing blanket searches, as the "worst instrument of arbitrary power, the most destructive of English liberty and the fundamental principles of the law ... by placing the liberty of every man in the hands of every petty officer," William Pitt, the British Prime Minister, was expressing the same sentiment in England, protesting a cider tax, and its enforcement provisions.

> *The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the force of the Crown. It may be frail—its roof may shake—the wind may blow through it—the storm may enter—the rain may enter—but the King of England cannot enter; all his force dares not cross the threshold of that ruined tenement!*

Thus the unalienable right to personal security was a pressing issue for our Revolutionary forefathers. The new state constitutions of that day quickly set forth the principle in precise language. And the Fourth Amendment to the later Federal Bill of Rights made it a part of higher law, and the law of our land.

Yet this right is a partially qualified one. And its exercise, and its protection, must again weigh societal factors in the balance, so that it is not turned into a shield behind which citizens may hide to engage in activities destructive of fellow citizens or of the state broadly.

The controversy surrounds the term "unreasonable" as used in the Fourth Amendment:

> *The right of people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against* unreasonable *searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the person or things to be seized.*

What is a "reasonable" search by law enforcement officials? And what ingredients must be present to violate the principle of reasonableness?

Generally, through the long thrust of American history, four conditions have had to be met, in order to justify a search as reasonable. Clearly a search is not reasonable if authorized or undertaken for evidence to convict a suspect of a crime. Such a search would violate the Fifth Amendment, protecting the citizen against incriminating himself, as well as the Fourth Amendment. Searches may be made only for the fruits of a crime—for objects the possession of which is, in and of itself, criminal, and for the instruments by which a crime was committed. Thus, as Telford Taylor has pointed out:

> . . . *when Fatima came upon Bluebeard's diary, in which he recorded his slayings of her predecessors, and the location in his house of the axe with which he killed them, the police could get a search warrant for the axe, which is an instrumentality of the crime, but not for the diary, which is "mere evidence." And if they were to go to arrest him, they might search him and seize the diary if it is on his person, but may not search his house for it.*

Furthermore, a search is not reasonable, unless there is probable cause to justify it. There must be facts or circumstances or information sufficient to justify a reasonable man in believing that stolen property, or the instruments of a crime, are concealed in a particular place. And the information relied on to justify a search must be sworn to by somebody. To be reasonable a search must specify the exact place to be searched, and the particular items to be seized. It cannot be undertaken at random with respect either to the scene of the search or the object of the search. Rummaging and ransacking are flatly forbidden.

Generally, a reasonable search must be authorized by some judicial official. A search warrant must be issued before the search can be properly undertaken. Ample evidence to justify a magistrate in issuing a warrant must be procured prior to the search. A warrant obtained after the search does not meet the reasonable requirement.

So, the fundamental purpose of the Fourth Amendment was to interpose the disinterested determination of a judge between the zeal of the police and the right of privacy. Clearly, like each of our Constitutional guarantees, an over fastidiousness with protecting liberty of the citizen above the rights of society may afford a shelter for criminals. But our forefathers thought that this was not too great a price to pay for that decent privacy of home, papers and effects which is indispensable to individual dignity and self-respect, a privacy which must not be disturbed except in case of overriding social need, and then only under stringent procedural safeguard.

During the 19th century, most search and seizure questions turned around stolen goods, seizure of diseased or adulterated goods, or dangerous substances such as gun powder. Congressional authority for federal search warrants was confined largely to enforcement of the revenue laws, with the exception of a few special enactments dealing with obscene literature, counterfeiting of money and trademarks, and lottery tickets in the District of Columbia. But by the early years of the 20th century, the "exclusionary" rule was adopted making it a violation of the 5th Amendment to introduce illegally seized material in court. Now an arrested person had good reason to contest the validity of the search of his person or premises, when the articles, possession of which branded him a criminal, fell into the hands of the police. Then challenging the reasonableness of searches and seizures began to come in, and the range was fascinating.

One leading case involved an action to recover the value of two drums, seized from the plaintiff when he was arrested for beating them in violation of a city ordinance. After trial, the Mayor refused to return the drums, because the plaintiff declared he would beat them again as soon as he got them back. The Supreme Court of Maine ruled that this would not do. The drums were legitimately seized for use as evidence against the plaintiff at his trial. But thereafter, they must be returned, since drums were not contraband.

The first Supreme Court case involving a contested search leading to arrest, came in 1920. Here Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes expanded the exclusionary rule. The proprietors of a company were indicted by a federal grand jury and taken into custody. While they were under detention, federal officials, "without a shadow of authority," raided the company offices and made a clean sweep of all the books, papers, and documents found there. The plaintiffs were then indicted on the basis of the information revealed. Holmes branded the action "an outrage." Evidence so acquired, he argued, should not only be inadmissible in court, it should not be used at all!

In the 1920's, searchers and seizers also got a new tool. Wiretapping had been made technologically possible before the days of World War I. By the 1920's, government officials were using it, particularly in the area of catching violators of prohibition. But was listening in on a telephone conversation, as a third party, a form of illegal search and seizure? No, said Chief Justice Taft in the Olmstead case in 1928. The Fourth Amendment does not forbid what was done here. There was no searching. There was no seizure. There was no entry of the house or office of the defendant. "A standard which would forbid the reception of evidence obtained by other than nice ethical conduct by governmental officials, would make society suffer, and give criminals greater immunity than has been known heretofore."

"On the contrary," said Justice Holmes, "wiretapping is dirty business!" And his colleague, Justice Louis D. Brandeis went further, stating:

> *The makers of our Constitution undertook to secure conditions favorable to the pursuit of happiness. They recognized the significance of man's spiritual nature, of his feelings and of his intellect. They knew that only a part of the pain, pleasure and satisfactions of life are to be found in material things. They sought to protect Americans in their beliefs, their thoughts, their emotions and their sensations. They conferred, as against the government, the right to be let alone—the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men.*

In the 1930's, Congress moved into the area, making it illegal, in the Federal Communications Act of 1934, for any person "not being authorized by the sender . . . to intercept any communication and divulge or publish the existence, content, substance, purport, effect or meaning of such intercepted communication to any person." And the courts quickly applied this rule to wiretapping.

By this time, however, electronic technology had added a further challenge. Bugging, i.e., the use of electronic eavesdropping devices, quite separate from any form of public communications, raised totally different legal questions. Eavesdropping of this sort could be done through a wide range of devices: spike mikes, wall mikes, complex electronic listening devices, hidden recording equipment, accessible not only to law enforcement officials, but to a wide range of private citizens. In dealing with this form of potentially unreasonable search and seizure, the courts applied the Olmstead "physical intrusion, or trespass" test to bugging as well as wiretapping.

But Brandeis' concern over invasion of more than simply physical premises lurked in the conscience of many of the Justices. And in 1967, Justice Potter Stewart proclaimed for the Supreme Court: "The narrow view that property interests, or technical notions of trespass control the right of the government to search and seize, is no longer binding." The inference from the ruling was clear. It marked a significant shift of emphasis from protection based on property rights to that based on personal privacy. Privacy now came to turn on whether the person felt he was alone. One should have the security of knowing he enjoys privacy even in public places like a telephone booth, just as he should be similarly protected in a business office, a friend's apartment, or even in a taxicab. On the other hand, Justice Stewart made clear, if federal agents follow the procedure of preliminary justification, central to the Fourth Amendment, and attain a proper warrant, their actions can be justified. The impact of the ruling was to take a long stride toward a possible solution of the privacy-intrusion dilemma. The Court eased curbs on bugging, while adding safeguards against it. This then enabled the enactment of both wiretapping and bugging statutes, provided that the carefully delineated Fourth Amendment safeguards against unreasonable search and seizure would be scrupulously observed by all branches of the government.

In the 1970's, the Watergate revelations disturbed millions of Americans. The presence of an "enemies list" in the White House, and the revelations that the government was snooping into people's personal lives and personal beliefs, so shattered the credibility of many of the leaders of that government, that their removal was demanded. The revulsion with Watergate demonstrated once again the commitment of the American people to the ancient principle of the sanctity of the individual's private life. Hostility to the abuse of federal power came, in part, from a hostility to unreasonable search and seizure activities by the federal government.

Thus the issue of privacy in America, which launched our Republic, still remains as one of its basic, and central problems and one to which citizens react strongly. Certainly the fact that man can be manipulated by being exhibited in the open, as well as being kept in the dark, became evident from this episode. How these two rights, of affording information, and protecting privacy, are reconciled, will continue to be one of the critical constitutional tests of the electronic age.

Equal Protection Under the Law

The Declaration of Independence boldly states that "all men are created equal." On the surface this statement is an unequivocal declaration of human equality and dignity; yet the definition of Equality—and the role of government in protecting and promoting this ideal—has preoccupied Americans for generations. The concept of equality implies equal protection under the law for all citizens. At various times, the struggle for equality, and the application of equal protection to different segments of the population, has produced controversy and conflict. Common sense tells us that people differ in intelligence and ability, in material conditions and opportunity. Why then this belief in equality?

The founding fathers were heirs to a long tradition of the belief in the equality of citizens under the law and the role of government in protecting that equality. Beginning with ancient Roman law, extending to the

Young citizens register to vote in fulfillment of another unalienable right.

Magna Carta and John Locke, the idea that equality before the law is the best safeguard of individual liberty became the central feature of democratic thought. A century before the American Revolution, Roger Williams practiced the concept of equality by extending religious and political freedom to various faiths and nationalities in Rhode Island. To Williams, nature itself dictated that "every man esteem another as one who is naturally his equal, or who is a man as well as he." Williams assured the citizens of Rhode Island that the government would afford them equal access to the benefits of the law in the protection of their rights.

By the late eighteenth-century, the American colonists, who were acutely aware of their unequal status in the British Empire, engaged in a revolution to establish the dual objectives of liberty and equality. Having won their independence, the founding fathers faced the question of applying these twin doctrines to the new nation. On one point there was unanimous agreement. Clinton Rossiter notes that the founding fathers were committed to the proposition that though:

> *men might be grossly unequal in appearance, talents and intelligence, virtue, and fortune.... to this extent at least they were absolutely equal: No man had any natural right of dominion over any other, every man was free in the sight of God and plan of nature.*

Concomitant to the principle of equality is the idea that a democratic

government should take positive action to insure that the law is justly and equally applied to all individuals regardless of status or wealth. Equal protection is thus an immutable part of the democratic ideal, and this concept was reflected in the United States Constitution and the constitutions of the various states. Yet this ideal did not strictly correspond to the reality of a nation in which millions of individuals were held as chattel slaves. The inconsistency of black slavery in a society supposedly committed to equality under the law plagued the nation from the very beginning. Even before the founding of the American Colonization Society in 1817, sensitive Americans recognized this paradox in our national life, yet the resolution of this question would await the tragedy of civil war.

In a real sense, American history is the history of groups and individuals struggling to attain the equality which the founding fathers promised. The first objective in this struggle was obtaining the right to vote. In most states voting requirements in the early national period restricted suffrage to white, male property-holders. By the 1820's, these restrictions no longer reflected the growing democratization of American society. Americans during the Jacksonian "age of the common man" finally won universal white manhood suffrage. Moreover, demands for social equality also surfaced in such activities as the free-school movement, the elimination of property qualifications for office holding, and the fight against the financial domination of the Bank of the United States. The focus of this egalitarian movement was the destruction of special privilege, and the extension of opportunity to all citizens according to their individual abilities.

The decades before the Civil War were ones in which the demands for equality and equal protection under the laws were heard from all segments of the population. Workingmen's parties sprang up demanding equal access to the avenues of social advancement; women at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 told the nation, "Woman is man's equal [and] was intended to be so by the Creator;" and finally, militant abolitionists demanded the end of slavery as a first step to the extension of equality before the law to all people regardless of race. By 1860, the equality issue had generated such tension that it could no longer be compromised within the existing political system.

During the course of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address, re-examined the first principles of the nation in the light of the current struggle. Emphasizing national commitments to liberty and equality, he called for a "new birth of freedom," which would insure the preservation of government "of the people, by the people, for the people."

In the period immediately following the Civil War, much of the abolitionists' zeal for extending equality to the freedmen was channeled into legislative ends. The 13th Amendment not only freed the slaves, its wording was such that any actions which seemed in the future to impose a "slave-like status" upon Americans could be invalidated by the Supreme Court, an argument used by the Warren Court in the 1960's to strike down housing segregation. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 built upon this concept in an attempt to extend equal rights to all Americans in all areas, public and private. But it was the Fourteenth Amendment which finally put into formal law the concept of equal protection. "No State," stated that most important of the modern amendments, "may deny any person the equal protection of the laws." "This amendment," explained Thaddeus Stevens in 1866, "provides that the law which operates on one man, shall operate equally on all." "As such," Stevens contended, "the amendment was the final triumph of the rights of man, and the extension of those rights to every human being."

Americans of the late 19th century, however, were unwilling to extend equal protection guarantees to all areas of life. By 1900, the courts had ruled that the equal protection clause did not apply to discrimination by private parties. Further, in the Plessy v. Ferguson case of 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that separating the races did not violate equal protection, as long as the separate facilities afforded to each race were themselves equal. The ruling induced the states to pass batteries of segregation laws which locked this "separate but equal" principle into American life until the famous case of Brown v. Topeka Board of Education rejected that rule in 1954.

Despite this legal roadblock, demands for equality did not diminish. Militant agrarians, in the Granger and Populist movements of the late 19th century, filled their pleas and their platforms with assaults upon special privilege, and calls for equal rights under the law. Labor organizations, from the National Labor Union, and the Knights of Labor, to the militant I.W.W., campaigned from the 1870's to the 1930's against unfair legal restrictions impeding labor's right to organize, labor's right to strike, labor's right, in other words, to gain a more equal position within American society. The women's suffrage movement of the early 20th century revived pre-civil war themes of the inequalities American society heaped upon women. And Congress by the 1920's finally afforded American Indians national citizenship, and presumably the equal rights which came with it. Through this period, groups such as the NAACP, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the American Jewish Congress assisted individuals and groups in asserting the rights denied them because of prejudice, intolerance, and discrimination. In their fight for legal relief and redress, these organizations struck at the bigotry and intolerance behind the denial of equal access to the blessings of American liberty.

World War II altered this picture sharply. Americans had fought against European and Asian dictatorships whose central purpose had been to destroy both freedom and the equal rights and opportunities available in a free society. After the war, President Harry Truman, conscious of the "moral overstrain" which so clearly existed in American society between our claims of commitment to equality and its broad denial, established a Committee on Civil Rights. This Committee reflected the intention of the executive branch to assist people in gaining the equal protection of the laws which the Constitution presumably afforded them. *This concept of equality which is so vital a part of the American heritage*, stated the Committee, in its famous report, "*To Secure These Rights* "

> *knows no kinship with notions of human uniformity or regimentation. We abhor the totalitarian arrogance which makes one man say that he will respect another man as his equal only if he has* 'my *race*, my *religion*, my *political views*, my *social position*.' *In our land, men are equal, but they are free to be different. From these very differences among our people has come the great human and national strength of America.*

The Committee further stated:

> *It is not enough that full and equal membership in society entitles the individual to an equal voice in the control of his government; it must also give him the right to enjoy the benefits of society and to contribute to its progress. The opportunity of each individual to obtain useful employment, and to have access to services in the fields of education, housing, health, recreation, and transportation, whether available free or at a price, must be provided with complete disregard for race, color, creed, and national origin.*

The implementation of this *Report*, however, was not easy. Congress clearly was not prepared to move in this direction in the late 1940's. President Truman was hamstrung in implementing it unilaterally from his office. Thus, it fell to the Supreme Court to assume the challenge. Starting with Brown v. Board of Education, the Court did just that. Through the 1950's, and into the 1960's the Court turned time and time again to the Equal Protection Clause to strike down segregation in schools, in public facilities, in housing, and in employment. By the 1960's, Congress had become a willing partner in this defense of equal protection, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 placed the federal government directly in opposition to "discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." By 1968, Congress had responded further to the national commitment to equal protection by writing an Indian Bill of Rights, guaranteeing tribal members the same unalienable rights on the reservation under tribal government as Indians enjoyed as citizens in white society. Such moves inspired further demands for equality and equal treatment by Chicanos, and other ethnic groups, by welfare recipients, prisoners, mental patients, gays, and a growing concern at many levels for the rights of juveniles and children.

But again, this trend inevitably produced dilemmas, conflicts, and balancing judgments. Is equality so important an objective to warrant the limiting of the liberties of other Americans? Does forcing Americans to grant full equality constitute a coercive action threatening to individual liberty and freedom of choice? De Tocqueville, in the 1830's recognized the dilemma of an egalitarian society which also encourages individualism. The resolution of this dilemma continues to confront the nation.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Mary F. Berry, *Black Resistance/White Law: A History of Constitutional Racism in America* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1971). A somewhat bitter, but balanced treatment of the changing legal status of Black Americans over 200 years, by a talented Black attorney and legal scholar.

Irving Brant, *The Bill of Rights: Its Origin and Meaning* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965). A sweeping treatment of the rights in the first Ten Amendments, from their English origins to the 1960's, by the biographer of James Madison, Father of the Constitution, and sponsor of the Bill of Rights. **ND/AUC**

Zechariah Chafee, *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941). The classic treatise on the law of free speech, with emphasis on the years between the outbreak of World War I, and the late 1930's. Libertarian, and socially conscious, this work had a profound effect on free speech law in the inter-war years. **ND/C/AUC**

Robert J. Harris, *The Quest for Equality: The Constitution, Congress, and the Supreme Court* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1960). A solid work on the history of the concept of equal protection from precolonial times to the civil rights movement of the 1960's, with broad analysis of its meaning and purpose.

Mark DeWolfe Howe, *The Garden and the Wilderness: Religion and Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). A thoughtful assessment of the tradition of church and state in America, deploring, in some ways, the modern Supreme Court's application of the "wall of separation" concept as rigid and ahistorical.

Jacob Landynski, *Search and Seizure and the Supreme Court* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966). A solid, and interesting historical analysis of the concept of search and seizure from English origins to modern application. **ND/B/C**

Leonard W. Levy, *Freedom of the Press from Zenger to Jefferson* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966). A useful anthology of material on press freedom, with a lengthy introductory essay by a legal scholar of the colonial and early national period. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

William H. Marnell, *The Right to Know; Media and the Common Good* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973). An analysis of speech and press issues, from libel and censorship, to privacy. The work stresses the responsibilities of freedom and the necessity of striking the balance carefully so that the public good is not injured by those who would abuse their rights. **C**

Arthur R. Miller, *The Assault on Privacy: Computers, Data Banks, and Dossiers* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1971). A readable, if not altogether pleasant, study of the new dimensions of the privacy, and search and seizure issue in a modern society prepared to turn to technological gadgetry in the pursuit of efficiency in securing and compiling data on the citizen. **ND/B/C/AUC**

Loren Miller, *The Petitioners: The Story of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Negro* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1966). An historical study, by a distinguished Black legalist and judge, himself caught up in the optimism of the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's. Readable and solid, it makes an interesting contrast to the work of **Mary F. Berry.** **ND/B/C/M**

Richard E. Morgan, *The Supreme Court and Religion* (New York: The Free Press, 1972). A good readable overview of the church-state issue, from demonology to Yoder and the recent Amish cases, with good material on reaction to the developments of the years since the late 1940's. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Paul L. Murphy, *The Constitution in Crisis Times, 1918–1969* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). A general analysis of recent constitutional developments, to the end of the Warren Court, with special emphasis on the development of modern civil liberties issues in their historical context. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Paul L. Murphy, *The Meaning of Freedom of Speech: First Amendment Freedoms from Wilson to F.D.R.* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972). A study of the free speech issue, as a public policy question, from the restrictive World War I situation to new levels of free speech and free press permissiveness in the 1930's. Special emphasis is placed on the relation between speech and the labor movement in the 1920's. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Harold L. Nelson, *Freedom of the Press from Hamilton to the Warren Court* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1967). A sequel to the **Levy** anthology, with a wide range of materials on more modern free press issues, and a useful introduction and bibliography. **ND/B/C/M**

Alan Reitman, (ed.), *The Pulse of Freedom: American Liberties: 1920–1970* (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1975). A series of interpretive essays by six authorities on the development of civil liberties and civil rights in the United States since the founding of the American Civil Liberties Union in 1920.

John P. Roche, "American Liberty: An Examination of the 'Tradition' of Freedom," in **Milton Konvitz** and **Clinton Rossiter** (eds.) *Aspects of Liberty* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1958). A stimulating, and controversial essay on civil liberties in the United States, which argues that they were more often "honored in the breach" in the 19th century, and have only been protected by law in the years since the 1930's. A useful piece to provoke group discussion. **ND**

Telford Taylor, *Two Studies in Constitutional Interpretation* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1969). Two perceptive, and fact filled lectures on Search, Seizure, and Surveillance, and Fair Trial and Free Press, by a Columbia University Law professor and concerned civil libertarian.

“A MORE PERFECT UNION” THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

by JAMES MORTON SMITH

Writing to Thomas Jefferson from Philadelphia in 1787, James Madison looked back at the four months of bickering and debate, the balancing of clashing views and diverse interests, and concluded that the achievement of the Constitutional Convention was nothing “less than a miracle.” Clearly, the new-modeled government was something new under the sun; neither history nor political theory could furnish a model for the new federal republic. Indeed, finding the proper terminology to describe the new creation was difficult, as Madison noted in Federalist Paper No. 39:

> *The proposed Constitution ... is ... neither a national nor a federal Constitution, but a composition of both. In its foundation it is federal, not national; in the sources from which the ordinary powers of the government are drawn, it is partly federal and partly national; in the operation of these powers, it is national, not federal; in the extent of them, again, it is federal, not national; and, finally in the authoritative mode of introducing amendments, it is neither wholly federal nor wholly national.*

One of the admirers of the new Constitution observed that it was “so novel, so complex, and intricate” that writing about it would never cease.

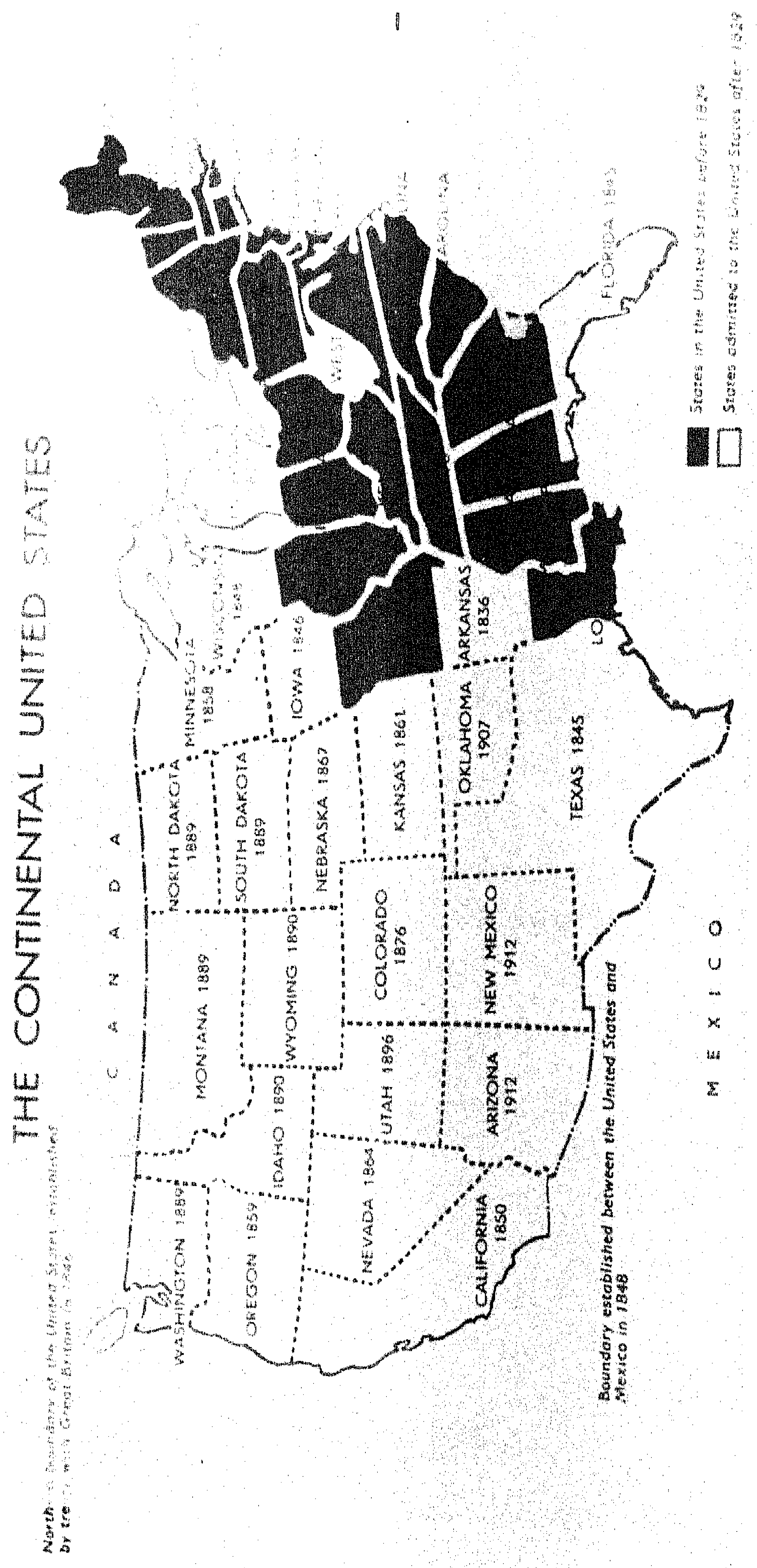
Now the oldest written constitution in the world, it continues to intrigue commentators, and one of the most recent, Daniel J. Boorstin, summarized the major source of its constant fascination: “No fact about the United States is more astonishing than that a nation which has grown so spectacularly, which has transformed daily life so dramatically—the food people eat, the buildings that shelter them, the clothing they wear—still continues to govern itself by a system devised two centuries ago.”

Almost as astonishing is the fact that today's Constitution was the Founding Fathers' second effort in ten years to establish a firm federal hoop to hold the 13 states and the American people together. Replacing the Articles of Confederation which had been drafted in 1777 and ratified in 1781, the Constitution of 1787 was an attempt “to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

Indeed, the Revolutionary generation spent a quarter of a century debating the nature of a “more perfect Union,” first within the British Empire and, after Independence, within the American Union. As early as 1754, Benjamin Franklin remarked on the failure of imperial and colonial agents to agree on a plan of federalism at the Albany Conference: “Everybody cries, a Union is absolutely necessary, but when they come to the manner and form of the Union, their weak noddles are perfectly distracted.” In the years between 1763 and 1789, both weak noddles and strong puzzled over the essentially federal question of distributing governmental authority between one central and several colonial or state units, without impinging on the liberties of the people. They were concerned about balancing Power and Liberty, in finding the proper political adjustment between freedom and authority, in establishing the right relationship of ordered liberty in a free society.

By Consent of the States

During the pre-Revolutionary arguments between Great Britain and the American colonies, Parliament passed the Declaratory Act which asserted “full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America ... in all cases whatsoever.” As Sir William Blackstone noted in his classic *Commentaries on the English Law*, “there is and must be ... a supreme, irresistible, absolute, uncontrolled authority in which the ... rights of sovereignty reside.” And the sovereign power of the British Constitution, he stressed,



was lodged in king-in-Parliament, the trinity of king, lords, and commons, whose actions “no power on earth can undo.”

The Declaration of Independence, which stresses life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, replaced parliamentary sovereignty with popular sovereignty, rejecting unitary, arbitrary, centralized power that threatened the liberties of the people. No one in 1776, as John Adams recalled, thought of consolidating this vast continent under one national government “but only of establishing a Confederacy of States, each of which must have a separate Government.”

The problem throughout America after the break with Britain was to constitute new governments, transforming colonies into states. How could the revolutionary concepts of the sovereignty of the people be institutionalized and legitimated? “To contrive some *Method* for the Colonies to glide insensibly; from under the old Government, into a peaceable and contented submission to new ones” was, according to Adams, “the most difficult and dangerous”—as well as the most important and exciting—“part of the Business Americans have to do in this mighty contest.” Between 1776 and 1780 all of the colonies transformed themselves into states by adopting constitutions, but in no state was the quest for John Adams’ “method” of legitimating the people as constituent power more carefully worked out than in Massachusetts. Indeed, Andrew C. McLaughlin, in his presidential address to the American Historical Association in 1914, claimed that “if I were called upon to select a single fact or enterprise that more nearly than any other single thing embraced the significance of the American Revolution, I should select—not [the battle of] Saratoga or the French alliance, or even the Declaration of Independence—I should choose the formation of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780.” And he justified his selection by pointing out that “that constitution rested upon the fully developed [constitutional] convention, the greatest institution of government which America has produced, the institution which answered, in itself, the problem of how men could make government of their own free will.”

In Massachusetts as in most other states the legislature requested authorization from the towns to draft a constitution in 1776. Three fourths of the towns responding directed the General Court to proceed, but several proposed a special state convention. The town of Concord was the first to stress the difference between legislative powers and the notion of the people as constituent power in constituting a government. The people

The states which were part of the Union before 1829 where slavery was permitted are shown in black. Those states admitted after 1829 are in white, with the dates of their admittance.

George Washington, standing at right, dominates this scene of the signing of the American Constitution, in a painting by Howard Chandler Christy.

of Concord argued that the legislature was not the proper body to draft a constitution "first because we Conceive that a Constitution in its Proper Idea intends a System of Principles Established to Secure Privileges, against any Encroachments of the Governing Part—2nd Because the Same Body that forms a Constitution have of Consequence a power to alter it. 3rd Because a Constitution alterable by the Supreme Legislative is no Security at all to the Subject against any Encroachment of the Governing part on any or on all of their Rights and privileges."

Concord then outlined what it conceived to be the proper way to go about establishing a new government: "it appears to this town highly necessary and Expedient that a Convention, or Congress be immediately Chosen, to form and establish a Constitution, by the Inhabitants of the Respective Towns in this State, being free and of twenty one years of age, and upwards in Proportion as the Representatives of this State formerly were Chosen; the Convention or Congress not to consist of a greater number than the house of assembly of this State heretofore might Consist of, Except that each Town and Distirict Shall have Liberty to Send one Representative, or otherwise as Shall appear meet to the Inhabitants of this State in General."

Nor was the election of delegates to be the only creative role of the people: "When the Convention, or Congress have formed a Constitution they shall adjourn for a Short time, and Publish their Proposed Constitution for the Inspection and Remarks of the Inhabitants of this State." Only a constituent convention chosen by the people could create a constitution; only a popularly ratified constitution could create a government.

After the towns had submitted their proposals, the House in 1777 appointed a committee to recommend the procedure for establishing "a new and good constitution and form of government." Despite the fact that most of the towns responding favored the House's offer to draft a constitution, the committee proposed that the people elect delegates to a general convention. Instead, the House rejected this recommendation, and later in the year the House and Council sat as a constitutional convention, as authorized by the people, and drafted a constitution. When it was submitted to the people for ratification in 1778, however, it was defeated by a 5 to 1 margin.

Pressure for a constitutional convention, along the lines suggested by Concord, led the General Court to poll the towns for authorization to call a state convention. An overwhelming majority of towns favored the step, one town indicating a unanimous vote except for one person "who is an old insignificant Torey and never ought to vote in any case." Delegates to the special convention were chosen by all freemen over twenty-one "for the sole purpose of forming a new Constitution." The convention decided to submit the constitution to the people in the towns and specified that ratification required the approval of two thirds of those voting. A ratifying convention would examine the town returns and count the votes.

Thus after six years the "fully developed convention" praised by Professor McLaughlin fully established the people as constituent authority. As John Adams, the author of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, wrote in the preamble: "The body politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals." In phrases reminiscent of the Mayflower compact, he added: "It is a social compact, by which the whole people covenants with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good." But Adams' formula for establishing this government was altered significantly by the elected delegates of the people. Whereas Adams' enacting clause stated precisely that "We . . . the delegates of the people of Massachusetts . . . agree upon the following Constitution," the convention itself insisted that although the delegates agreed on the constitution it could not become effective until ratified by the people. Accordingly, the popularly elected convention delegates dropped the reference to themselves in the enacting clause and introduced the classic formulation of the people as constituent power: "We . . . the people of Massachusetts . . . agree upon, ordain and establish the following Declaration of Rights and Frame of Government, as the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

In a letter to their constituents, the convention made a specific point of stressing to the people that it "had resolved that Representation ought to be founded on the Principle of equality."

Thus the Constitution of 1780 created a limited government, with a careful system of checks and balances, for the Massachusetts constitution builders knew, as they said in their address to the public, that "a Power without any restraint is Tyranny."

The Massachusetts process illustrates perfectly the way in which Americans found a method to grant power to government, but at the same time, by basing government on the consent of the governed, to preserve liberty. Starting with the fundamental proposition of popular sovereignty—that government rests on consent of the governed—they institutionalized this revolutionary concept by perfecting the constitutional convention. By prescribing governmental limits with a written constitution, with built in checks and balances and with an additional bill of rights to protect liberty, they broke with the monolithic concept of governmental sovereignty—Parliament's claim to all power in all cases whatsoever—and actualized the principle of limited government.

John Adams, who was chiefly responsible for the Massachusetts Bill of Rights and the Constitution of 1780, was in France on the peace commission when he heard that his work had been ratified by the people. Proclaiming that action "a phenomenon in the political world that is new and singular," he saluted his fellow citizens as "the first people who have taken so much time to deliberate on government—that have allowed such universal liberty to all people to reflect upon the subject, and to propose objections and amendments—and that have reserved to themselves at large the right of finally accepting or rejecting the form." It was, he concluded, an "epoch in the history of the progress of society."

In Congress Assembled:

The New States, Confederation Congress, and the Constitutional Convention

Most of the state constitutions of the Revolutionary era, with the notable exception of Pennsylvania's, contained a statement about the necessity for a separation of powers. Nurtured on the teachings of "the immortal Montesquieu," as the Continental Congress labelled him, most colonists agreed that "when legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty." And he added in his *Spirit of the Laws*, "there is no liberty, if the judiciary power be not separated from the legislative and executive."

Virginia's Declaration of Rights, drafted by George Mason before the Declaration of Independence, stated "that the legislative and executive powers of the state should be separate and distinct from the judiciary." And to make doubly sure, the Virginia Constitution reiterated the theme that "the legislative, executive, and judiciary departments shall be separate and distinct, so that neither exercise the powers properly belonging to the other." But in separating powers, Americans relocated them, vesting in the legislature, which had conducted the battle against royal governors, the Crown, and Parliament, most of the prerogative powers taken from the governors. Thinking in pre-Revolutionary terms, they tried to isolate the legislature from executive management, manipulation, and influence. Thus the constitutions saw a substantial shift in the responsibility of government toward legislative supremacy at the state level. By vesting lawmaking powers in the legislature and by also transferring to it many of the prerogative powers of the executive including appointments and patronage—the state constitutions placed the major job of government in the representative body, transforming political power in America and leading such observers as Richard Henry Lee to declare that the new governments were "very much of the democratic kind."

At the same time that the state constitutions expanded the power of the legislatures, they restricted the powers of the governors, even though governors were chosen directly or indirectly by the people, not by the King.

Most of the states adopted separate Bills of Rights or inserted provisions protecting liberty in the text of their constitutions. Perhaps the most important of these is Virginia's Declaration of Rights, a forerunner of the federal Bill of Rights. The timing was important the Bill of Rights preceded the Frame of Government. As the Declaration of Independence put it, after enumerating the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men. In all of the states in 1776, except Pennsylvania, the constitutions were created by the legislatures or by Revolutionary congresses representative of the people.

Most of the state constitution makers agreed on the need for a governor as the ruling magistrate, although Pennsylvania eliminated the office altogether and vested executive control in an Executive Council of twelve chosen directly by the people. All of the states closely restricted the power of the governor, making him, as Jefferson observed, an "administrator," stripping him, as John Adams noted, "of most of those badges of domination, called prerogatives."

In most of the new state constitutions the power of appointment rested with the legislatures or was exercised concurrently with the governor, further strengthening legislative domination of the government. Similarly, most state constitutions vested control of the courts and judicial tenure in the legislatures. Thus those state constitutions which recognized the principle of separation of powers in theory nonetheless established legislative supremacy in practice.

Not only were the legislatures supreme within the states, the states were supreme within the Union. The Continental Congress which adopted the Declaration of Independence began as an advisory body to the thirteen states. The final version of the Declaration was headlined as "the unanimous Declaration of the *thirteen* United States of America," and it concluded by proclaiming that "*these* United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent *States*." When the Articles of Confederation were adopted in 1781 each state specifically retained "its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled." The Articles, as President Ezra Stiles of Yale noted, were not meant to be "a body in which resides authoritative sovereignty; for there is no real cession of dominion, no surrender or transfer of sovereignty to the national council, as each state in the confederacy is an independent sovereignty." The legislative power of the Confederation Congress could be exercised only "by consent of the states."

The Confederation government did not operate on the individual citizens of the United States but upon the states in their governmental or corporate capacity. The Confederation was ratified by the state legislatures, not by the people. Since the people were not represented, Congress could not tax them, nor did Congress have the power to regulate commerce. Since the states were sovereign, they withheld from the Confederation any power of sanctions because the creation of the states could not coerce its creators.

Voting on all issues was by states, not by individual delegates, with each state having one vote. Powers withheld from Congress remained with the states, or more precisely, with the state legislatures. John Adams described the Massachusetts delegation in Congress as "our embassy," since he viewed the Confederation Congress not as "a legislative assembly, nor a representative assembly but only a diplomatic assembly."

As such the Confederation Congress concluded the Revolutionary War and negotiated an effective peace, dealt effectively with western land problems, and preserved the union of the states. But with the end of the war, Congress' power began to disintegrate at the same time that the state legislatures turned their attention to exercising their sovereign rights without fear of an external threat. If the Confederation Congress seemed to have too little power in the 1780's, it began to appear to many that the state legislatures might have too much. Fifty years ago Edward S. Corwin wrote a perceptive essay on "The Progress of Constitutional Theory Between the Declaration of Independence and the Meeting of the Philadelphia Convention." Instead of viewing the constitutional arrangements at the state and federal levels as being forever frozen into their only legitimate configuration in 1776, he traced the fundamental transformation of republican thought and constitutional theory that occurred in the years between 1776 and 1787, when the Articles of Confederation were replaced with the Federal Constitution.

The crucial question in the years after the Declaration of Independence turned on the role of the public in a republic. The Declaration of Independence *in theory* located sovereignty in the people, as did the state constitutions, but *in practice* that sovereignty was identified, as it had been in the pre-Revolutionary debates, with the only organ of government which spoke for the people—the legislature. Few observers in 1776 realized the possibility of any inconsistency—much less any clash—between the concept of legislative supremacy—or legislative sovereignty through representatives—and popular sovereignty—or the people at large.

And yet, during the Confederation period the problem at the state level became in part that of securing the rights of individuals and of the minority against the majority in the legislatures—or to put it another way, of protecting individuals and assemblies of people outside the Assembly from the power of the people within the Assembly.

When the Americans rejected Parliamentary sovereignty, they embraced the corollary idea that "it is impossible there should be two independent Legislatures in one and the same state"—that is, that sovereignty could be divided. "The same collective body," James Wilson wrote in 1776, "cannot delegate the same Powers to distinct representative bodies." It seemed "incongruous and absurd that the same Property should be liable to be taxed by two Bodies independent of each other" and that "the same offense" should be "subjected to different and perhaps inconsistent Punishments."

Accordingly, the Confederation did not divide sovereignty; it placed it with the free, sovereign, and independent states. That meant that reformers seeking to strengthen Congress inevitably had to confront the powers retained by the state legislatures.

Many histories and historians focus their attention on the attempt of a dynamic minority of nationalists to strengthen the central government by amending the Articles to give additional powers to Congress, especially the taxing power and power to regulate trade.

Despite these unsuccessful efforts to strengthen the central government by increasing its powers, it was clear by the middle of the 1780's that substantial reform of the Confederation would be impossible as long as each state was vested with freedom, sovereignty, and independence over its own affairs, and the central government had no way of enforcing sanctions upon the states or the people.

To many contemporary observers it became increasingly obvious that defects of the Confederation were organically related to the defects of state sovereignty and simple majoritarianism at the local level. One of the first critics of legislative sovereignty was Thomas Jefferson, whose term as governor of Virginia under the Constitution of 1776 made him skeptical of the concentration of "all the powers of government, legislative, executive, and judiciary," in the legislature. Despite a declaration about the separation of powers in the Constitution, the former governor complained, "the judiciary and executive members were left dependent on the legislature, for their subsistence in office, and some of them for their continuance in it. If therefore the legislature assumes executive and judiciary powers, no opposition is likely to be made; nor, if made, can it be effectual; because in that case they may put the proceedings into the form of an act of assembly which will render them obligatory on the other branches. They have accordingly, in many instances, decided rights which should have been left to judiciary controversy: and the direction of the executive, during the whole time of their session, is becoming habitual and familiar."

Though such a possibility was unforeseen in 1776, the consolidation of governmental power in the hands of the legislature, Jefferson concluded, "is precisely the definition of despotic government. 173 despots would surely be oppressive as one." And the author of the Declaration of Independence concluded: "An *elective despotism* was not the government we fought for."

What kind of government did Jefferson think the Revolution was fought for? One "in which the powers of government should be so divided and balanced among several bodies of magistrates"—and Jefferson regarded the executive, judiciary, and legislative as "three branches of magistry"—"as that no one could transcend their legal limits, without being effectually checked and restrained by the others."

Madison agreed that the "union of powers" in the Virginia Constitution was, as Jefferson had complained, the very definition of "tyranny." And most of the state constitutions suffered from similar defects, according to Madison. His comprehensive critique of the politics of the Confederation period, written in 1787 on the eve of the Philadelphia convention, was entitled "Vices of the Political System of the United States." Despite the existence of the separate sovereignties and the Confederation government, he saw the political system as a *single* system and the problem of reform as a *single* reform. Basing his analysis on his experience as a member of the Confederation Congress and of the Virginia legislature, he criticized the Confederation's lack of sanctions which subordinated the central authority to the state sovereignties: failure of the states to meet the financial requisitions of the Confederation Congress; state encroachments on powers specifically delegated to the Confederation government; state trespasses on the rights of neighboring states; state violations of the treaties of the United States and of the law of nations; lack of concert among the states in matters of common interest, such as the regulation of trade; and the absence of a guaranty to the states of their republican constitutions and laws against internal violence. He was even more critical of the evils flowing from legislative sovereignty within the states individually. As early as 1785, Madison had lamented the lack of wisdom and steadiness in state legislation, "the grievance," he noted, "complained of in all our republics." In 1787 he listed additional grounds for complaint: the multiplicity of laws, "a nuisance of the most pestilent kind"; the mutability of laws, a clear mark of "vicious legislation"; and finally, the injustice of the state legislation, which brought "into question the fundamental principle of republican government, that the majority who rule in such governments are the safest guardians both of public good and private rights."

This concentration of power in the state legislature, "drawing all power into its impetuous vortex," as Madison phrased it in the *Federalist Papers*, created a legislative sovereignty dominated by a simple majoritarianism that threatened individual liberty through "unjust violations of the rights and interests of the minority, or of individuals." Although the central problem of the Confederation period was the central government, the successful attempt to reform the political system of the United States came not so much from the efforts to bolster the central government as from creeping criticism of state sovereignty from below, by growing denials within the states that legislative sovereignty was the same as popular sovereignty. In short, the attack on state sovereignty was an inside job—one done inside the states.

The attack on state sovereignty during the Confederation period was closely linked with a re-examination of the relationship between legislative sovereignty and popular sovereignty. In the appraisal of the role of the public in a republic, the debate turned on the meaning of representation. In the contest between England and the colonies, the representatives in the colonial legislatures had had the support of the people, and after independence this support carried over into the contest between the state legislatures and the Confederation Congress, the ideological momentum of the Revolution favoring the states.

But in the Confederation period, people began to disentangle the strands of popular sovereignty and legislative sovereignty, so easily merged during the Revolution. In this contest between the people and the state governments, the strongest argument favored the people-at-large rather than the legislature or any particular governmental group.

The entering wedge in this argument was the Whig fear of political power. In Massachusetts the power of the legislature to establish a Constitution was roundly rejected; there the confidence of the people was transferred from their representatives in the Assembly to a specially called convention exercising constituent power. Moreover, the Constitution was later referred to town meetings and county conventions for approval, by-passing the legislature altogether.

Debates over the right of the people to "instruct" representatives also probed the relationship of legislative sovereignty to popular sovereignty—of the representative to the represented. Opponents of instruction came down hard on the side of legislative supremacy, arguing that the people had *elective* power, but not *deliberative* power. They acknowledged that the supreme power of legislation is in the people, but maintained that by electing representatives to make laws the people vested their original power in the legislature. Benjamin Rush, writing on the "Defects of the Confederation," summarized this view of legislative sovereignty handily by stressing the prepositions *in* and *from*. "It is often said," he observed, "that the 'sovereign and all other power is seated *in* the people.' This idea is unhappily expressed. It should be—'all power is derived *from* the people.' They possess it only on the days of their elections. After this, it is the property of their rulers, nor can they exercise it or resume it, unless it is abused."

It was precisely this orthodox Confederationist view that power is *derived* from the people rather than *seated in* them that came under attack increasingly in the 1780's. Most opponents of legislative sovereignty argued that there were limits to governmental power, even in a representative government. The question then became, *who shall decide* when the limits are exceeded. The ultimate answer in a republican system was inevitably that the people at large shall judge. All of this criticism underlined the limits of delegated power. "It is a vain and weak argument," said Thomas T. Tucker of South Carolina in 1784, "that, the legislature being the representatives of the people, the act of the former is therefore *always* to be considered as the act of the latter. They are the representatives of the people for certain purposes only, not to all intents and purposes whatever." Just as the Americans had chosen their own legislatures instead of Parliament in 1776, when faced in the 1780's with a choice between their own legislatures and the people as the source of authority and the repository of sovereignty, they chose the people.

The rejection of legislative sovereignty for popular sovereignty at the state level also altered the conception of the nature of representation, not only redefining the relationship between the people and their representatives in the lower house—traditionally the "popular" branch—but also dissolving the distinction between the lower house and the upper house, which before the Revolution had been the preserve of royal or proprietary appointees indentified with monarchical and aristocratic interests opposed to the people. Increasingly, the senates in the states were viewed as a second representative branch, giving a double representation of the people in the legislature. And in New York and Massachusetts, the governor was directly elected by the people.

The extension of the principle of representation—the electoral basis of delegating the people's power—to every public body could convert every elected official into a special representative of the people. But none of the representatives—nor all of them together—could speak with complete authority for the people, for the people had not delegated all power to their agents nor to the government. By the mid-eighties the concept of popular sovereignty was emerging at the state level as a more fundamental consideration than either legislative sovereignty or state sovereignty. By the exercise of the principle of representation the people could delegate their authority to create governmental Power and to protect individual Liberty, either by establishing governments "to secure these rights," as the Declaration of Independence phrased it, or by reserving these rights beyond the reach of even a legislative majority.

Thus the 1780's saw an attack on the idea of legislative sovereignty at the state level, which led to a relocation of sovereignty from the legislature to the people. That relocation made possible the extension of republicanism over a wider geographical area, if the people should decide to create a new level of representative government and delegate power to it. The Constitutional Convention did precisely that.

Seeking "a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government," the Philadelphia convention extended to the central government the representative principle which was common to all the states, overcoming Madison's criticism of the "want of ratification by the people of the Articles of Confederation" by creating a large republic based not on the states in their corporate capacity but on the people. The chief advantage of a large republic over a small one was the fact that it encompassed a greater number of interests scattered over an extensive geographical sphere of government, thus making it vastly more difficult for an unjust, dishonorable, or overbearing majority faction to encroach on individual liberties or private rights through majority rule. In such an extensive republic, Madison argued, "the people are broken into so many interests and parties, that a common sentiment is less likely to be felt, and the requisite concert less likely to be formed, by a majority of the whole." According to Madison, the "great desideratum of republican wisdom" was "to secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time preserve the spirit and form of popular government."

Rejecting the British system of balancing three forms of government derived from different social elements—king, the monarchy; lords, the aristocracy; and commons, the democracy—Americans had discovered that it was "not necessary to intermix the different species of government," as James Wilson noted, in order "to secure the advantages of all three." The source of authority for the Federal Constitution, according to Wilson, was "purely democratical," since "all authority of every kind"—legislative, executive, and judicial—"is derived by representation from the people and the democratic principle is carried into every part of the government."

In addition to their emphasis on the republican nature of the new national government, the federalists stressed two structural features of the constitutional system: the separation of powers at the federal level and the division of powers among governmental units. "In the compound republic of America," Madison explained, "the power surrendered by the people is first divided between two distinct governments, and then the portion allotted to each subdivided among distinct and separate departments." The separation of governmental power, therefore, was viewed as the paramount defense of liberty. As Madison later observed, a constitution in America had become a charter of Power granted by Liberty, not, as in Europe, a charter of Liberty granted by Power.

The antifederalists, like the debaters in the imperial dispute in 1773-75, denied the possibility of dividing sovereignty; there could not be "a sovereignty of power existing within a sovereign power." Either the states or the central government were sovereign. "These two concurrent powers cannot exist long together," George Mason predicted; "the one will destroy the other." Ultimately the Federalists agreed that sovereignty was indivisible. "In all governments," said James Wilson of Pennsylvania, "there must be a power established from which there is no appeal, and which is therefore called absolute, supreme, and uncontrollable." "The only question," he argued, "is where the power is lodged?"

In Great Britain it was lodged in Parliament; sovereignty was identified with the government, not the people. Under the Confederation, the states had been proclaimed as sovereign, but Wilson argued that the antifederalists who claimed that "there cannot exist two independent sovereign taxing powers in the same community" missed the point by misplacing sovereignty. The supreme power rested not with the states but with the people, "as the fountain of government." "They have not parted with it; they have only dispensed such portions of power as were conceived necessary for the public welfare"; "they can delegate it in such proportions, to such bodies, on such terms, and under such conditions, as they think proper." Contemplating the Constitution, the poet Francis Hopkinson asked, "what is the object exhibited to our contemplation?" and replied: "A whole people exercising its first and greatest power—performing an act of sovereignty, original, and unlimited."

What had the Founding Fathers created? It was a very complex political machine, depending, as Jefferson said, on a "proper complication

An artist's concept of the melding of men and institutions in the building of American democracy.

of principles." It was divided, separated, limited, unmixed or popular government; it was federalistic, pluralistic, constitutionally restrained republicanism. It was the supreme culmination of the American Revolution, a democratic form of republican rule which placed limitations on simple majoritarianism to preserve individual liberty while creating a more powerful general government and a more perfect Union.

"A More Perfect Union"

The People and the Government

One of the major accomplishments of the Federal Convention was the

invention of the American presidency. The creation of that new office was, as Hamilton observed in *The Federalist Papers*, "attended with greater difficulty" than perhaps any other provision. But the establishment of an energetic and independent chief executive was itself a measure of the transformation of republican thought between 1776 and 1787. "Before the Revolution," Jefferson later wrote, "we were all good Whigs; cordial in their free principles, and in their jealousies of the executive magistrate." This radical Whig fear of executive power—the revulsion against monarchy and prerogative powers—was one of the reasons why the office of governor had been restricted in most of the state constitutions. Even though an elected governor replaced the hereditary monarch or his appointee, most Americans continued to think in conventional Whig terms. Power tended to corrupt, whether it was in the hands of a hereditary or an elected ruler. Thinking in terms of the past experience, most Americans pitted governors against the governed.

After a decade of experience under republican systems, however, many Americans argued that the rulers and the people no longer had opposing interests, contending that instead all authority—legislative, executive, and judicial—flowed from the people. Even the President of the United States, Hamilton emphasized in the New York ratification convention, "will be himself the representative of the people." As John Dickinson noted, "the whole people of the United States are to be trebly represented . . . in three different modes of representation"—in the bicameral legislature, the presidency, and the judiciary. "Remembering the many instances in which governments vested solely in one man, or one body of men, had degenerated into tyrannies," John Jay wrote, the framers of the Constitution and the people who ratified it "judged it most prudent that the three great branches of power should be committed to different hands."

One of the chief advantages of the Constitution over the Confederation, according to its supporters, was the creation of an independent executive and judiciary. Despite its lack of powers, the Federalists claimed the Confederation Congress was dangerous because it was "a single body of men possessed of legislative, executive and judicial powers." Unlike the state constitutions, the Federal Constitution successfully established a separation of powers. Congress was independent of the President and the Judiciary, the President was independent of the Judiciary and Congress, and a separate Federal Judiciary, which was completely lacking under the Confederation, was independent of the President and Congress. Chief Justice John Marshall made the Supreme Court the supreme arbiter in the Federal system, establishing in the classic case of *Marbury vs Madison* the doctrine of judicial review of Congressional legislation. He also established the right of the Court to decide the constitutionality of both the federal and state legislative bodies and to review state court decisions. A 20th century historian has written "Marshall exalted the central government wherever the states came into conflict with it and through judicial review he reserved the ultimate power within the Federal structure for the Supreme Court."

Through its history the court has ranged from liberal to conservative and back again and it has interpreted the Constitution both broadly and narrowly depending on its membership. But, in some ways, it has never departed from the original nationalism of Marshall. Just as Marshall shaped the court of judicial development, George Washington was chiefly instrumental in developing the office of the Presidency. As Pierce Butler, one of the Founding Fathers noted, the Constitution Convention would not have made the executive powers so great "had not many of the members cast their eyes toward General Washington as President, and shaped their ideas of the Powers to be given a President by their opinions of his Virtue."

The Founding Fathers favored a strong but limited executive, one with considerably less power than that vested in the British monarchy. Indeed, the language of the Constitution is couched in terms of power. "The executive *power* shall be vested in the President.... The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy.... He shall have *power*, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make Treaties." He also was given the "*Power* to Grant Reprieves and Pardons." "He shall take care that all Laws be faithfully executed." "He shall from time to time give to Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." "He may require the opinion in writing of the principal officer in each of the executive Departments."

Most historians agree that Washington's eight years as President demonstrated that executive power was completely consistent with the genius of republican government. Putting his prestige on the line in an untried office under an untried constitution, Washington was fully aware, as he pointed out in his First Inaugural Address, that "the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as *deeply*, as *finally*, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."

Perhaps Washington's chief strength—the key to his success as a military and a political leader—was his realization that in a republic the executive, like all other elected representatives, would have to measure his public acts against the temper of public opinion. As military-commander dealing with the Continental Congress and the state governments during the Revolution, Washington had developed a sensitivity to the importance of administrative skills as a means of building public support of the army fighting for popular government. As President he applied the same skills to win support for the new federal government. In his letter requesting Jefferson to serve as Secretary of State, he wrote: "I consider the successful Administration of the general Government as an object of almost infinite consequence to the present and future happiness of the Citizens of the United States."

From Washington's time until the present the Constitution, once labelled by Alexander Hamilton as "a frail and worthless fabric," has survived. And as its strength has grown, so has the power of the Presidency. That growth has been sporadic, beginning in Washington's two terms, but the great accessions have come in the twentieth century due in part to an enlarged foreign policy. In 1793 President Washington issued a Proclamation of Neutrality as a unilateral presidential act, claiming that the "executive Power" clause vested in the President the prerogative to conduct foreign policy, except for Congress's power to declare war and the Senate's power to ratify treaties. Although the United States had signed a Revolutionary War treaty with France in 1778, the President claimed the power to judge national obligations under that treaty. Hamilton argued that even though executive action might affect "the power of the legislature to declare war," it nonetheless belonged "to the 'executive power' to do whatever else the law of nations, cooperating with the treaties of the country, enjoin in the intercourse of the United States with foreign powers."

James Madison, who with Hamilton and John Jay had written the *Federalist Papers* five years earlier, denied the President's right to unilaterally promulgate a neutrality proclamation, contending that the powers of declaring war and interpreting treaties were not inherently executive in America, though they were in England. The power to declare war carried with it the means to make that power effective. Judging the obligations imposed by treaties involved judging whether war might or might not be a necessity, and the power to declare war rested with Congress. Presidential proclamations about treaty obligations or executive action in questions of neutrality might narrow Congress's options by creating "an antecedent state of things."

Having proclaimed neutrality, Washington soon learned that there was no way to punish those who violated the proclamation since they had broken no federal statute. Accordingly, he asked Congress "to correct, improve, or enforce" neutrality with appropriate legislation, thus siding with Hamilton in theory and with Madison in practice.

The two conceptions of Presidential power—Hamiltonian and

Madisonian—have co-existed ever since, though the Hamiltonian view has won out most of the time.

Perhaps the most important contributions to the theory of the Presidency in the nineteenth century came from Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Abraham Lincoln. Despite the Federalists' attempt to label the War of 1812 as "Mr. Madison's War" the Revolutionary generation of Presidents from Washington to Monroe scrupulously observed their constitutional relationship with Congress. It was Andrew Jackson who first transformed the Presidency into a powerful office, though he was more imperious than imperial in his exercise of executive power. In his Bank Veto Message and in his Proclamation against the Nullifiers, he took strong stands, acknowledging as he always did that the President was "accountable at the bar of public opinion for every act of his Administration." When he removed government deposits from the Second Bank of the United States, the Senate censured him for what it claimed was an assumption of illegal and unconstitutional powers. Jackson promptly challenged the House to impeach and the Senate to try him, a step which neither House took.

Even though Jackson expanded presidential power drastically, he deferred to Congress on the war-making power. When France refused to pay for damages done to American shipping during the War of the French Revolution, Jackson favored reprisals and asked Congress to delegate authority to allow him to wage limited war if France persisted in refusing to pay the American claims. But Congress refused the request, declining to share its war-making power.

Although Jackson favored the recognition of Texas in 1836, he realized that such a step might be "equivalent under some circumstances to a declaration of war." Since Mexico viewed Texas as a province in revolt rather than an independent republic, Jackson referred the question of recognition to Congress. He did not take a stand on "the strict constitutional right of the Executive" in this instance, but since recognition would probably lead to war, he thought the issue called for a "previous understanding with that body by whom war can alone be declared, and by whom all the provisions for sustaining its perils must be furnished."

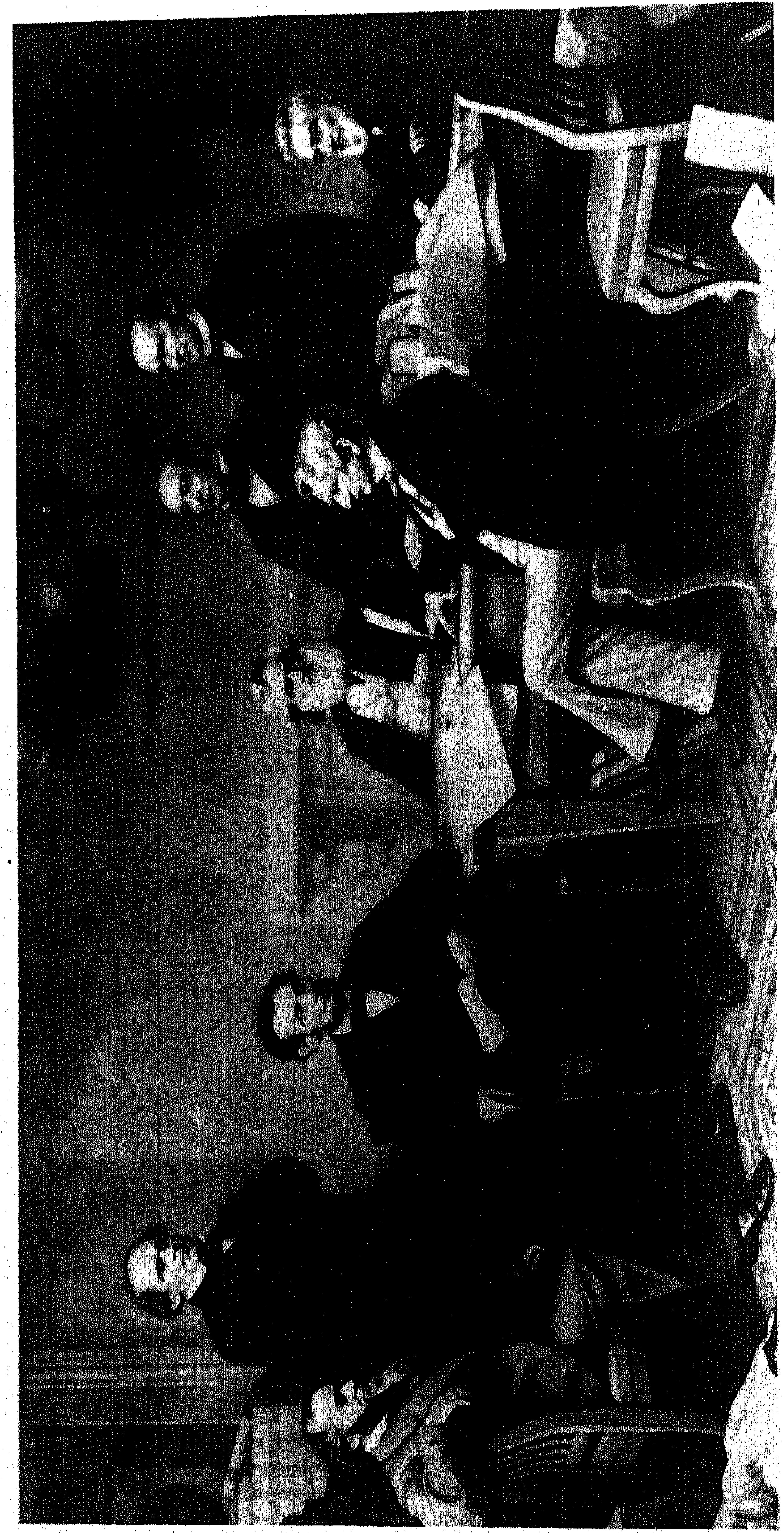
After Congress annexed Texas in 1845, President Polk dispatched American troops into disputed territory claimed by Texas and Mexico. When fighting broke out, Polk virtually presented Congress with a *fait accompli* and called for the recognition of a state of war, which Congress promptly gave. Thus the President's control of troop movements and diplomatic negotiations—his prior initiative—could create what Madison had called "an antecedent state of things," which virtually forced Congress to declare war or at least to recognize the existence of a state of war.

But it was the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln's views of the Presidency that most transformed that office in the nineteenth century. When Lincoln was inaugurated in 1861, seven southern states had seceded and formed the Confederate States of America. Lincoln rejected the physical and constitutional possibility of secession and pledged the enforcement of federal laws and the protection of federal property. Denying any intention to make war on the Confederacy, he said there need be no violence "unless it is forced upon the national authority." When hostilities began with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Lincoln declared that insurrection, not war, existed. Insisting that it was not state governments which had rebelled but combinations of individuals "too powerful to be suppressed" by ordinary legal processes, the President avoided a formal acknowledgment of a state of war. Nor did Congress adopt a declaration of war. When Congress convened in special session, Lincoln justified his actions—calling out the militia, enlarging the Army and Navy, suspending *habeas corpus*, proclaiming a blockade of the Confederacy—and asked Congress to approve them. "Whether strictly legal or not," he said, these measures "were ventured upon under what appeared to be a popular demand and a public necessity; trusting then as now that Congress would readily ratify them."

Responding to Lincoln's plea, Congress approved and legalized retrospectively "all the acts, proclamations, and orders of the President ... respecting the Army and Navy ... or relating to the militia or volunteers from the States." Later Congress authorized the President to proclaim a state of insurrection, which he did in August 1861.

But Lincoln also exercised wide powers independently of Congress, evolving an extraordinary "war power" theory which completely revolutionized the President's function as Commander-in-Chief. Essentially, he wedded the "Executive power" clause—making it the duty of the President to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States" and "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed"—to the "Commander-in-Chief" clause, which states that "the President shall be the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States."

From these sources, and the constitutional authority to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it, the war power flowed to the President in time of insurrection. The Constitution did not specify whether Congress or the President should have the power to suspend *habeas corpus*, but Lincoln acted before Congress convened. "When rebellion or invasion comes," he later explained, "the decision is to be made ... and I think that the



President Abraham Lincoln reading his Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet in 1862. Left to right: Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton; Secretary of Treasury Salmon P. Chase; Lincoln; Secretary of Navy Giddeon Wells; Secretary of State William H. Seward (foreground); Secretary of Interior Caleb B. Smith; Postmaster General Montgomery Blair; and Attorney General Edward Bates. (From an engraving by A.H. Ritchie of a painting by Francis B. Carpenter.)

man whom, for the time, the people have, under the Constitution, made the Commander-in-Chief of their Army and Navy, is the man who holds the power and bears the responsibility of making it."

The Emancipation Proclamation, which eradicated slavery by presidential authority, was one of the boldest uses of the Chief Executive's "war power" theory. Lincoln defended his action "as warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity." And he later noted that "certain proceedings are constitutional when, in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety requires them, which would not be constitutional when, in absence of rebellion or invasion, the public safety does not require them."

Lincoln's theory provoked Congress to establish the Committee on the Conduct of the War, but it was Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, who felt the backlash after hostilities had ended. Impeached by the House for firing Secretary of War Stanton in defiance of the Tenure of Office Act, an act which Congress had passed over his veto, Johnson escaped removal from the Presidency by a single vote when the Senate acquitted him. The rationale for the Tenure of Office Act was that officials whose appointment required the Senate's approval could not be removed without the Senate's consent. Johnson viewed this denial of his right to fire subordinates as an invasion of his constitutional authority as President, and he later claimed that he knowingly disobeyed the law in order to challenge its validity. The failure to convict Johnson eliminated impeachment as a viable means of removing the President under ordinary political circumstances, and it was not until the House Judiciary Committee adopted three articles of impeachment against President Nixon in 1974 that Congress resorted to that extraordinary constitutional device again.

Although impeachment failed, Congress continued to dominate the policies of the post-Civil War era, so much so that Woodrow Wilson's first book, published in 1885, was entitled *Congressional Government.* He lamented the lack of Presidential leadership, observing that "the President is no greater than his prerogative of veto makes him; he is, in other words, powerful rather as a branch of the legislature than as the titular head of the Executive."

But twenty years after his critical blast at "leaderless government," Wilson had completely changed his view of the Presidency. In his book on *Constitutional Government in the United States*, published in 1908, Wilson stressed the fact that the President is the only person "for whom the whole nation votes.... His is the only national voice in affairs. Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him.... If he rightly interprets the national thought and boldly insists upon it, he is irresistible; and the country never feels the zest of action so much as when its President is of such insight and caliber." As Wilson later put it, the Presidency is "the vital place of action in the American system."

What had happened in the preceding two decades to so transform Wilson's thinking about the Presidency? He suggested that it was the Spanish-American War and America's entry into the twentieth century as a world power that propelled the Presidency to its leadership role in government. When foreign affairs were the dominant concern of the nation, Wilson noted later, "its Executive must of necessity be its guide, must utter every initial judgment, take every first step of action, supply the information upon which it is to act, suggest and in large measure control its conduct. The President of the United States is now ... at the front of affairs, as no president, except Lincoln, has been" since the days of Jefferson and Jackson.

The burgeoning of presidential power in the field of foreign affairs also coincided with the decline of the *laissez faire* theory of government regulation of business. The growth of the national economy required national legislation, since states found it increasingly difficult to regulate interstate business. This meant that the President became a more active leader on domestic affairs as well as foreign affairs. Theodore Roosevelt seized a powerful legislative initiative in both fields, and was frank to admit that he had "a very definite philosophy about the Presidency. I think it should be a very powerful office, and I think the President should be a very strong man who uses without hesitation every power that the position yields; but because of this fact I believe that he should be sharply watched by the people [and] held to a strict accountability by them."

Wilson wrote his book on *Constitutional Government* in the last year of Roosevelt's administration and it owed much to his observation of McKinley's and Roosevelt's presidencies. When Wilson was elected President in 1912, his victory was the first time in the twentieth century that one party had replaced the other. Although he received neither a popular nor an electoral majority in his three-way contest with Roosevelt and Taft, he quickly marshalled support behind his domestic program and later rallied the nation during World War I. Despite his conviction that the President could control foreign affairs "without any restriction whatever"—it was, he said, "one of the greatest of the President's powers"—he preferred not to rest his powers on constitutional implications, and he relied less on the exercise of his executive war power than did Lincoln, requesting Congressional authorization on the theory that "we are jointly the servants of the people."

But his Fourteen Points were exclusively a Presidential action, taken without consultation with Congress, and so provoked Senator Henry Cabot Lodge that he observed sarcastically that God required only Ten Commandments. At the end of the war, Charles Evans Hughes wondered, "in view of the precedents now established, whether constitutional government as hitherto maintained in this Republic could survive another great war, even victoriously waged."

Twenty years later, at the end of Franklin D. Roosevelt's first two terms but before America's entry into World War II, Edward S. Corwin, the most careful student of the American Presidency in the first half of the twentieth century, agreed that "the present enlarged position of the President in the constitutional system requires of the American people a deliberate effort at constitutional reform." Otherwise, he added, "what was the result of democracy may turn out to be democracy's undoing." Most political commentators have not agreed with that assessment, which was based in large part on Corwin's analysis of the destroyer-base deal on the eve of America's entry into World War II. The destroyer deal was completed by executive agreement after careful consultation between the executive and legislative branches and with the candidate opposing Roosevelt in 1940. After the election, Roosevelt's Lend-Lease bill was approved by Congress not only as an aid to Britain but also as opposition to Nazi Germany, but Congress added a provision reserving the right to repeal the act and reclaim its authority by concurrent resolution, which is not subject to a Presidential veto.

With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Congress's declaration of war in 1941, however, Roosevelt built upon Lincoln's theory of executive war power and vastly expanded the presidential prerogative. Precedents set in World War I smoothed the way for prompt mobilization, and Congress quickly passed two omnibus War Powers Acts. Moreover, the resort to emergency powers to deal with the depression—powers delegated to the President by Congress—accustomed Congress, the courts, and the people to acquiesce in plenary executive authority. Utilizing both emergency powers—he had proclaimed an "unlimited national emergency" in 1941—and the Commander-in-Chief Clause, he established numerous agencies to control the wartime economy, only once calling on Congress to authorize one by statute. The Emergency Price Control Act in 1942 recognized the Office of Price Administration, which Roosevelt had created by executive order in April 1941, and delegated to it virtually unlimited legislative authority over the national economy.

The federal government's most drastic invasion of individual rights in American history occurred when President Roosevelt issued an executive order, later approved by congressional enactment, which relocated Americans of Japanese descent in detention camps. In a Supreme Court case the majority upheld the uprooting on the grounds of military necessity rather than racial prejudice, though Justice Murphy in a dissenting opinion concluded that the case rested on "questionable racial and sociological grounds" which were "utterly revolting to a free people."

The Growth of Presidential Power

Thus, an expansive Presidential war power was the legacy of World War II. In the years since, historians and political scientists have shaped postwar views with a series of generally laudatory books about *Presidential Government*, as James McGregor Burns entitled his study in 1965.

In 1966, Aaron Wildavsky conducted a survey of presidential initiative and congressional response in both foreign and defense matters and domestic affairs from 1948 to 1964. His striking conclusion was that the United States has one President, but it has two presidencies, one for domestic affairs, the other for foreign policy. "Since World War II," he noted, "Presidents have had much greater success in controlling the nation's defense and foreign policies than in dominating its domestic policies."

Conscious of its new international responsibilities in the postwar world, the United States took a leading part in the establishment of the United Nations, agreeing to assist in the maintenance of peace through collective security—by force if necessary. The rise of the Cold War and a nuclear arms race created unprecedented problems for American foreign policy, requiring the possibility of an instant action or an instant response. Congress passed the United Nations Participation Act, and the President negotiated and the Senate ratified, for the first time in American history, a peacetime defensive alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which pledged the United States along with other signatories, to automatic intervention in case any member suffered armed attack.

The use of troops in the postwar period for peace-keeping or war-making raised a thorny constitutional question: did the various treaty commitments upset the traditional balance between the executive and legislative branches in questions of war and peace? As early as 1948 President Truman asserted that he had the power to send troops, without the consent of Congress, to Palestine as a part of a United Nations peace-keeping force. But it was not until June 1950, when North Korean Communist forces invaded South Korea, that President Truman acted upon his claim of authority to commit American troops to war without congressional consent. On June 25 the UN Security Council condemned the North Korean action as a breach of the peace, called for the withdrawal of the invading forces, and requested member parties to assist in executing its resolution. After consulting with his diplomatic and defense advisers that evening, Truman made his decision, without consulting Congress, to commit armed forces to support South Korea. On June 27 he informed congressional leaders of his decision, got their informal endorsement, and announced his decision to the American public. In his discussions with Congressional leaders during the next week, the President agreed to consider the possibility of requesting a joint resolution of Congressional approval, but when Secretary of State Dean Acheson recommended that he rely on his powers as President and Commander-in-Chief, he decided to forego the Congressional sanction. Although Congress virtually confirmed the President's action by subsequently supporting appropriations for the war, President Truman, by resting American intervention on the presidential prerogative, vastly increased the power of the President alone to take the American people into war.

When a nationwide steel strike threatened to hamper the production of vital military materials for American troops in Korea, President Truman seized the steel mills by executive order, basing the seizure not on statutory authority but on the inherent prerogative power of the President in time of national emergency. When the steel companies sought an injunction, government attorneys justified the seizure under Article II of the Constitution, which defined the duties of the President, "and whatever inherent implied or residual powers may flow therefrom," subject only to the impeachment or electoral defeat of the President. This spacious, if not specious, claim was rejected by the First District Court, which issued an injunction against the seizure. The Court of Appeals promptly restrained the issuance of the injunction and the case went to the Supreme Court for a definitive decision. In a 6 to 3 decision, with seven separate opinions, the Court dealt decisive blows to the dual doctrines of an independent presidential emergency power and his inherent power in domestic affairs. For the first time since the Milligan case in 1866, the Supreme Court held that the President's exercise of prerogative power was unconstitutional. Justice Jackson concluded that just because the President had sent troops to Korea by exercising his constitutional powers in foreign affairs did not mean that he, as Commander-in-Chief, had constitutional authority to control domestic affairs. Implicit in this argument was the assumption that neither the Korean crisis nor the Cold War (and later the Vietnam War) were full-scale emergencies which justified the exercise of presidential war powers such as those exercised by Lincoln, Wilson, or Roosevelt. What would be, in time of all-out war, responsible presidential autonomy might be, in time of crises short of all-out war, irresponsible presidential prerogative, particularly on the domestic front.

But the critical questions pertaining to presidential power in the post-Korean war period involved not domestic issues but foreign policy. The ideology of the Cold War in the 1950's and 60's pitted the United States against Russia in a worldwide political and perhaps military contest. After Korea, America maintained a large standing armed force, and the mere existence of such a huge military establishment placed enormous resources in presidential hands in peacetime. During the Eisenhower administration, the United States widened its treaty obligations, making international commitments, such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), in all parts of the world. In 1955 President Eisenhower sought and received a Congressional delegation of war-making authority "to employ the Armed Services of the United States as he deems necessary" in defense of Formosa, the Pescadores, and "related positions and territories of that area." In 1957 he sought a Congressional resolution on the Middle East authorizing use of American armed force "against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism."

The growing globalism of American diplomacy created a national security system that stressed secrecy and executive expertise for speedy and unilateral intervention in the affairs of foreign states, concentrating power in the hands of the president in the conduct of foreign affairs. Indeed, the Central Intelligence Agency, which operates under the cloak of secrecy, became an important instrument of American intervention in foreign countries, with no effective means for Congressional oversight or control.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., has noted that when John F. Kennedy became president in 1961 there was a basic difference between the domestic-policy Presidency and the foreign-policy Presidency. Even the Bay of Pigs fiasco, which had been a unilateral presidential initiative under both Eisenhower and Kennedy, did not jolt executive domination of the war-making power. And when Kennedy halted the Soviet move

to establish nuclear missile sites in Cuba, it was clear that there seemed to be, as Schlesinger says, "no alternative to unilateral presidential decision.... Even in retrospect, the missile crisis seems an emergency *so acute* in its nature and *so peculiar* in its structure that it did in fact require unilateral executive decision.... But one of its legacies was the imperial conception of the Presidency that brought the republic so low in Vietnam."

It was the presidencies of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon and their conduct of an undeclared war in Vietnam that forced the American people in general and historians and political scientists in particular to re-examine their favorable views of a strong Presidency. Both Johnson and Nixon subscribed to Woodrow Wilson's statement that the Presidency is "the vital place of action in the American system." One committed over half a million men to combat in a country half a world away and conducted what was essentially a Presidential war. The other withdrew combat forces, but in the process he invaded two neutral nations—Cambodia and Laos, mined the ports of North Vietnam, and carpet bombed Hanoi on the eve of the peace settlement in 1973, after Secretary of State Kissinger had said that negotiations were 99 percent complete.

When the Johnson administration argued that a Congressional declaration of war had become "outmoded in the international arena" and cited the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution as the "functional equivalent," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee rejected the argument, saying that "the intent of the framers of the Constitution with respect to the exercise of the war power has been virtually nullified." Nonetheless, both President Johnson and President Nixon cited the constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to justify the war in Vietnam. Both rested their war power on presidential prerogative, not Congressional consent. According to President Johnson in 1966, "there is only one that has been chosen by the American people to decide." President Nixon agreed and in 1970 specifically rejected the Tonkin Gulf resolution adopted by Congress in 1964. In 1971 Congress repealed that resolution and stated that it was the policy of the United States "to terminate at the earliest practicable date all military operations of the United States in Indochina."

In 1972 and 1973 the Senate passed a war powers bill designed to insure that any future decision on war would be the joint judgment of Congress and the President. In 1973 the House also passed its version of a war powers bill, providing for the convening of Congress if hostilities commenced while it was not in session. Neither bill has been enacted, but the Vietnam experience clearly convinced most Congressmen, Senators, and many American citizens that the war-making power was not the exclusive property of the President but belonged constitutionally to Congress.

Vietnam and Watergate merged the two presidencies mentioned by Wildavsky and created a political and constitutional crisis which led President Johnson to elect not to stand for re-election and forced President Nixon to resign the Presidency after the House Judiciary Committee adopted three resolutions of impeachment.

Watergate challenged the basic assumptions of the American political and constitutional system. The five men caught in the act of "bugging" and burglary in the Democratic National Headquarters in Washington's fashionable Watergate apartment and office complex were members of the White House's Special Investigations Unit which had been set up in 1971 to plug leaks of classified information to the news media.

Six days after the break-in, President Nixon ordered H. R. Haldeman to have the CIA request the FBI to halt its investigations into the source of the Watergate burglars' funding, on the pretext that national security would be threatened by the release of CIA secrets if the investigation proceeded. Thus began the coverup of what John Mitchell called the "White House horrors". "A veritable catalogue of illegal activities and abuses conceived and directed by the President and his men," according to reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward.

The crisis of the Nixon Presidency—the increasing number of criminal charges against his staff, his designation by a federal grand jury as an unindicted co-conspirator, the revelations before the Special Senate Committee headed by Senator Sam Ervin, each more astounding than the preceding one—led ultimately to what James Madison had called "the decisive engine of impeachment."

A unanimous decision by the Supreme Court cleared the way in a case with the symbolic title of the *United States versus Nixon*. It directed the President to surrender to the Special Prosecutor whom he had appointed, tape recordings of discussions between him and his aides, tapes which the President claimed were protected by an all-encompassing executive privilege. The Court looked at three essential questions: 1) Does the principle of separation of powers vest in the President an absolute privilege to protect his confidential communications by invoking executive privilege? 2) Which is more important in a criminal trial involving the Presidency—that the trial proceed with all the evidence available or that the President protect his personal materials? 3) Is the President the final judge in his interpretation of his constitutional powers and prerogatives?

The Supreme Court decided that President Nixon's claim to executive privilege in this instance was spurious, an illegitimate attempt by the President to invoke the long-established and judicially recognized tradition of executive secrecy for the protection of illegal conduct in the White House. President Nixon later obeyed the "definitive" decision of the Supreme Court, surrendering 64 tape recordings of Watergate discussions, 63 of them between the President and key aides. Among the tapes turned over were three conversations of June 23, 1972, which offered clear and convincing proof that President Nixon knew of the Watergate affair and had ordered its coverup.

On July 27 the House Judiciary Committee voted 27 to 11 that he be impeached because by "using the powers of his high office" he had "engaged personally and through his subordinates and agents in a course of conduct or plan designed to . . . obstruct the investigation" of the illegal Watergate entry, "to cover up, conceal and protect those responsible, and to conceal the existence and scope of other unlawful covert activities."

On July 29 the Committee indicted him for violating his constitutional oath of office to faithfully execute the office of President, charging that he had disregarded his "constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed" and had "repeatedly engaged in conduct violating the constitutional rights of citizens, impairing the due and proper administration of justice and the conduct of lawful inquiries, or contravening the laws governing agencies of the executive branches and the purposes of these agencies."

On July 30, the Committee adopted a third article of impeachment against the President for willfully disobeying its subpoenas, "substituting his judgment as to what materials were necessary for the inquiry." He had "interposed the powers of the presidency against the lawful subpoenas of the House of Representatives, thereby assuming to himself functions and judgments necessary to the exercise of the sole power of impeachment vested by the Constitution in the House."

The Committee rejected two additional articles, one involving the secret bombing of a neutral nation, Cambodia, and the other involving tax fraud, and unconstitutional receipt of emoluments from the federal government for his private homes.

When the President released the tape transcripts on August 5, he continued to insist that the evidence did not warrant his removal. But the Republican members of the impeachment panel announced that they would now support at least the obstruction of justice article when it came before the full House. Indeed, House Minority Leader John Rhodes informed the President that only 10 votes out of the House's 435 would be against impeachment. And Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott told the President that he had about 15 votes out of 100 against conviction in the Senate, a prediction corroborated by Senator Goldwater. On August 8, 1974, President Nixon resigned rather than face a trial that seemed inevitable.

Watergate, the Constitutional System and the Bicentennial

Abraham Lincoln claimed that the Declaration of Independence was "familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated." Is the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and the constitutional system that evolved from it as clear today as it was in Washington's and Lincoln's time or even in Franklin D. Roosevelt's time? To some observers, such as Rexford Guy Tugwell, a former aide of President Roosevelt, "the United States Constitution has ceased to be an instrument and has become an impediment." In 1969 Tugwell and a group based at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California, concluded a ten-year study of the Constitution and submitted a new draft which, according to them, would "let law catch up with life." "As we investigated the new institutions of American life," they wrote at the height of the Vietnam War, "and saw the President being forced again and again to operate on his emergency powers, we kept being driven back to a consideration of the document itself." Rejecting the constitutional arrangement worked out in the eighteenth century for an agrarian society, they proposed a twentieth-century version which they considered capable of meeting political issues in an urbanized and industrialized society.

But there seemed little interest in their proposal of a tricameral legislature as a balance for the swelling powers of the Presidency—one branch representing regions of the nation, a second representing broad constituencies of the people, and a third watching over the general welfare of the nation, with a power to declare national emergencies and overrule the courts on questions of constitutionality.

Other proposals concentrated on the central constitutional issue of the central government, the Presidency. Historian Barbara Tuchman, writing during the Watergate revelations in 1973, argued that the Presidential office "has become too complex and its reach too extended to be trusted to the fallible judgment of any one individual." She proposed a six-member directorate with a new chairman each year.

But in the end it was Congress and the courts which moved to curb the excess of executive power. Senator Hugh Scott summarized the situation when he wrote the following letter in longhand to the Father of the Constitution shortly after President Gerald R. Ford was sworn in:

> Aug. 9, 1974
> The Honorable James Madison
> Sir:
> It worked.
> Sincerely,
> Hugh Scott
> United States Senator

The Constitution and the constitutional system, as Scott's symbolic letter said so succinctly, had worked.

Political and constitutional problems remained, of course. The constitutional crisis of the period following World War II not only involved the growing power of the Presidency. That expanding power grew at the expense of the powers of Congress and the concept of the separation of powers. In the fiftieth anniversary issue of *Time* magazine, most of the articles discussed the decline of Congress and the constitutional system of checks and balances. Reporting on four regional seminars attended by scholars, civic leaders, and Congressmen, *Time's* editor said that the leading issue of the crisis was "whether a democratic society puts some value on collective wisdom as opposed to centralized individual wisdom, and whether the Congress can make a more constructive contribution to public policy." Senator Mike Mansfield summarized the issue this way in 1973: "If there is one mandate to us above all others, it is to exercise our separate and distinct constitutional role in the operation of the Federal Government. The people have called for the reinforcement of the checks and balances."

Watergate did, indeed, seem to pull people back to basics. Newspaper readers and television watchers received a two-year civics lesson involving the constitutional separation of powers and the role of President, Congress and the courts in the American political process. In an ironic way not intended by the President, Watergate and the crimes and misdemeanors of the Nixon administration did "bring us together." As Henry Steele Commager wrote shortly after Gerald Ford succeeded Richard Nixon: "The long-drawn-out process of inquiry by committee, by the courts, by the Congress is a stunning vindication of our constitutional system, a vindication of the principle of separation of powers, of the independence of the courts and of the foresight of the Framers. . . . "

Writing in a lighter vein, the humorist Art Buchwald ended on a Bicentennial note of hope:

I was at the White House that night to hear his resignation speech, *and what impressed me more than anything else was that while one leader of our country was resigning and another was taking his place, I did not see one tank or one helmeted soldier in the street and the only uniforms I saw that night were two motorcycle policemen who were directing traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue.*

Two hundred million people were able to change Presidents overnight without one bayonet being unsheathed. I believe that any country in the world that can still do that, can't be all bad.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). A thoughtful exploration of the relationship between American constitutional thought and the liberation tradition of English radical Whiggism.	**ND/B/C/ M/AUC**
Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1969). It traces the transformation of political and constitutional thought during the Revolutionary and Confederation eras to the crucial creation of a new and modern concept of constitutionalism.	**ND/B/C/ M/AUC**
Andrew C. McLaughlin, *Foundations of American Constitutionalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1932). An interesting study on the origins of federalism.	**ND**
James Morton Smith, ed., *The Constitution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). An Anthology of writings on the colonial background, the Revolutionary and Confederation periods, and the Federal Constitution. Includes articles by McLaughlin, Bailyn, and Wood as well as Edward S. Corwin, Robert R. Palmer, John P. Roche, Martin Diamond, and Daniel J. Boorstin.	
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WORKING IN AMERICA

by PHILIP P. MASON

Without work all life goes rotten. But when work is soulless, life stifles and dies
—Albert Camus

For more than three and one-half centuries the work place has been of basic importance to the growth and development of the American continent. Hard working settlers were the backbone of the first colonies in the New World. They and their descendants carved farms, villages, towns and cities out of the wilderness as the nation expanded westward, pushing steadily toward the Appalachians and beyond. Their strenuous toil was the key to a prosperous plantation economy in the South and equally important to the diversified economy of the northern colonies, that increasingly competed with the British in the world market as the Americans gained economic independence from England. A steadily expanding stream of immigrants throughout the 19th century added to the work force that helped build the transportation systems and provided the labor for the industrialization of America.

Many students of American history have raised the question of what motivated these hard working Americans. Was it something in the climate as Benjamin Franklin speculated, or was it the challenge of the environment, mere survival, or the satisfaction derived from the job? What role did the religion of the settlers have upon their work habits? Was the close proximity of effort and the end product of their toil a factor in the sense of pride in their accomplishments? Is there an "American Work Ethic"? Is it as relevant today as much as it was a century or two ago?

Is work a test of character, a measure of the moral worth of an individual? To what degree does it determine the status of the individual within his community? The historical perspective of work may provide the answers to some of these perplexing questions.

The American Work Ethic

The motives of the early colonists who cut family, community, and national ties in Europe to settle on new land thousands of miles away and the privations which they suffered in so doing were central in the concepts of work which developed in early America. Some settlers migrated to the American continent for religious reasons; most were attracted by the economic opportunities, abundant land, jobs, and opportunities for advancement. Wealthy families as well as those of modest means, and those who were penniless were drawn to the New World. Some settlers came against their will and others signed agreements whereby they agreed to work for a specified period of time—usually five or seven years—in return for free passage to America. In addition, after completion of their indentured servitude, they sometimes received certain necessities—a suit of clothes, farm tools, a year's supply of grain and a modest sum of money. In southern colonies the "headright" system developed, which provided that each settler or "head" entering a colony be given a grant of land, usually fifty acres. This system prompted the migration of countless landless Europeans to America.

Also in the early 17th century black Africans were brought to America, either as slaves or indentured servants. As early as 1619 Blacks had arrived in the colony of Jamestown. Their status as servant or slave was unclear, but by 1700 the institution of slavery was firmly rooted in the South and also in the North. The productivity of slave labor, the inhumanity of the treatment of slaves, the conditions under which they lived and worked, and the attitude of Blacks toward their servitude has received the increasing attention of historians and will continue to do so.

In the South, large scale plantation agriculture dominated the economy and through it southern settlers found products which could be sold or traded in Europe, and especially in England. Tobacco, indigo, and rice became cash crops and allowed the southern colonies to buy European manufactured goods.

Agriculture of a different variety also prospered in northern colonies. The colder climate and shorter growing seasons limited the products which could be grown. Thus cereal crops, including wheat, barley, oats and Indian corn and squash were the principal crops of northern colonists.

Fishing, encouraged and made possible by the close proximity of the Grand Banks off the Atlantic coast, some of the finest fishing grounds in existence, also attracted settlers. In contrast to the South, however, very few of the products of northern colonies were in demand in Europe; hence the North had practically no cash crops to trade for European manufactured goods.

Consequently, northern settlers by sheer necessity, had to become more diversified and self-sufficient. Crafts and manufacturing developed and prospered in the New England and middle colonies. The concentration of settlers in towns and cities was a natural development in the North, in sharp contrast to the rural development of southern colonies. Craftsmen and artisans of all kinds—carpenters, bootmakers, masons, tailors, brick layers, blacksmiths, clock makers, silversmiths, printers and weavers, to mention a few of the trades—were attracted to northern centers. In fact, craftsmen were so much in demand that a community's leaders offered inducements to artisans that included a house, a plot of land and a guaranteed amount of work if he would settle in their town.

As towns and cities grew in the North, creating markets, and as transportation between them was improved, specialization developed. As early as 1767 Lynn, Massachusetts was producing 80,000 pairs of shoes a year. Before the American Revolution the northern colonies were moving toward economic independence from England.

The soil and climate of the sections determined the products manufactured; but it was Puritanism and other religious reform movements which permeated every facet of life throughout the colonies, especially the attitudes of settlers toward work. According to the tenets of Puritanism, man was believed to be basically sinful and could be "saved" only by the "Grace of God." Few persons were considered "saved;" and the fate of everyone was preordained. The Deity sometimes gave hints of salvation by bestowing worldly success. Despite this dismal outlook the individual did not give up the hope of salvation. Thrift, hard work and prudence were qualities that were to be cultivated so men and women could convince themselves that they were members of the "elect" chosen for salvation.

The advice given by Benjamin Franklin in his popular *Poor Richard's Almanac*, published between 1732 and 1757, reflect such Puritanical attitudes toward hard work, thrift, frugality, honesty and prudence. The *Almanacs* reveal much about the values of colonial America—indeed, Franklin's proverbs describe the elements of the American "work ethic."

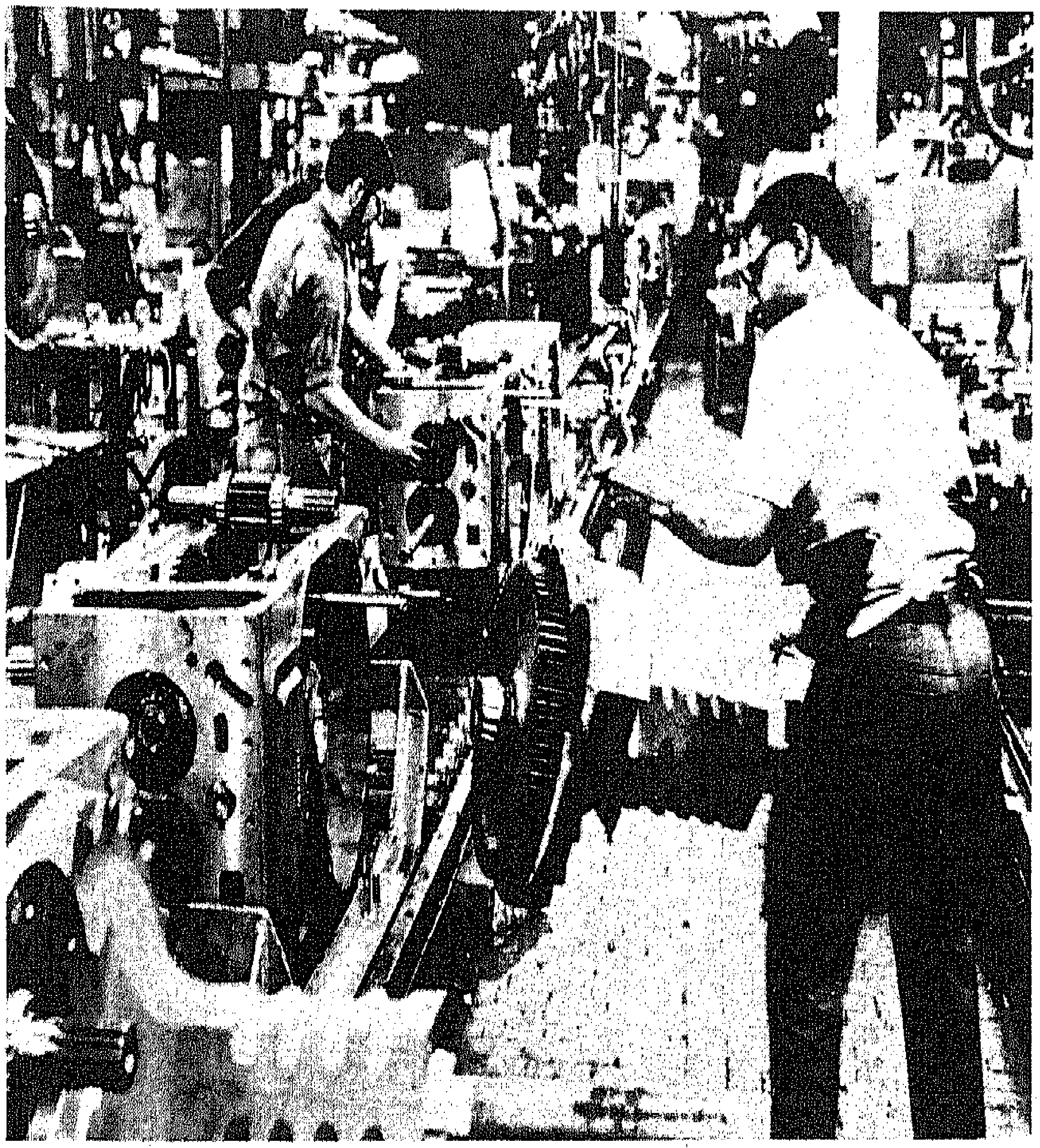
- *Trouble springs from idleness and grievous toil from needless ease.*
- *Be ashamed to catch yourself idle.*

- *Industry pays off debts, while despair increases them.*
- *Then plow deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and keep.*
- *But dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of…*
- *God helps them that helps themselves.*

Separation from England, culminating in the War for Independence, had profound effects upon the economy of the newly created nation and directly upon the worker. The colonies, especially those in the South which had relied heavily upon English manufactured goods for survival, found themselves without trading outlets. The Embargo of 1807, and the War of 1812 with England further forced the United States to rely upon its own manufactured goods. The development of self-sufficient economy coincided with the growth of American nationalism in the early decades of the 19th century.

The growth of American manufacturing and the beginnings of industrialization were stimulated by a series of inventions and innovations in America. The introduction of the factory system, which took place in the 1790's, revolutionized the American economy. It was accomplished by the English-born genius, Samuel Slater, who built a factory in Pawtucket, Rhode Island to produce cotton thread. Slater fled England and took with him "memorized" details for a textile factory despite the prohibition against the migration of skilled artisans from England and the strict enforcement of secrecy of English manufacturing processes. With the aid of Rhode Island businessmen, he built a textile factory in Pawtucket. The success of this venture led to the construction of other factories on the swiftly flowing rivers which dropped from the Appalachian plateau into the Atlantic Ocean. New factory towns—Lawrence, Lowell, Haverill, Nashua, Waltham, Manchester, Chicopee, Lynn—were typical of the New England factory sites.

Other inventions stimulated the industrialization of America. In 1800 Eli Whitney, who earlier had invented the cotton gin and thus revolutionized cotton production, introduced the concept of interchangeable parts in the production of rifles for the U.S. Army. John Fitch's improvement of the steamboat in 1790 marked the beginning of reliable transportation on western rivers and facilitated the settlement of the trans-Appalachian West, thus opening up new markets for eastern manufactures. Oliver Evans, who invented machines to expedite the milling of flour, was also typical of the innovators who helped develop the American factory system in the early national period of American history.



Skilled laborers, organized workers and good working conditions enable efficient assembly-line production of farm tractor parts at the International Harvester Company factory in Illinois.

By the end of the American Civil War, the triumph of industrialism was in sight. Manufacturing had expanded to all parts of the United States. Even in the South, there were attempts to introduce textile mills and other factories to give the South economic independence but this was resisted by a plantation aristocracy that dominated southern society. By 1850 the general prejudices against corporations were breaking down, and many states passed legislation allowing the establishment of such business empires.

The postwar years witnessed a rapid growth in industrialization in the United States with its tremendous demand for labor. A growing mass of immigrants swelled the population of seaboard cities and provided factory labor. The transcontinental railroads, the "miracle of the age", facilitated the opening of the West. Newly discovered natural resources—iron, copper, coal, oil, gold and silver stimulated the economy and created thousands of additional jobs. Other inventions—the Bessemer process and the open hearth method of producing steel, Westinghouse air brakes for railroad cars, more powerful steam locomotives, refrigerator cars, cheap oil for gasoline engines and to generate electricity—all contributed toward the industrialization of America.

From the time of its introduction in the United States, the factory system has met with less than enthusiasm from the workers. In fact, many of the complaints about factory work heard today were voiced in almost the same terms 150 years ago. Long hours, the tedium and monotony of tending machines, health hazards and insufficient wages to provide the promised living standard have always been a concern of workers. The operation of one of the first factory experiments, called the "Waltham System", which involved the employment of unmarried girls, reveals the early conditions of factory life and the attitude of workers.

As textile factories spread throughout New England in the first half of the 19th century, the biggest problem facing the mill operatives was finding workers. The availability of free or inexpensive land and the demand for skilled craftsmen created a serious labor shortage. This problem was solved by recruiting young unmarried teenage girls from the farms of New England. In the years between 1820 and 1850 thousands of girls were recruited to work in the New England textile mills.

Agents were hired by textile companies to scour the rural countryside to find recruits. A contemporary account describes the activities of the agent—often called a "slaver":

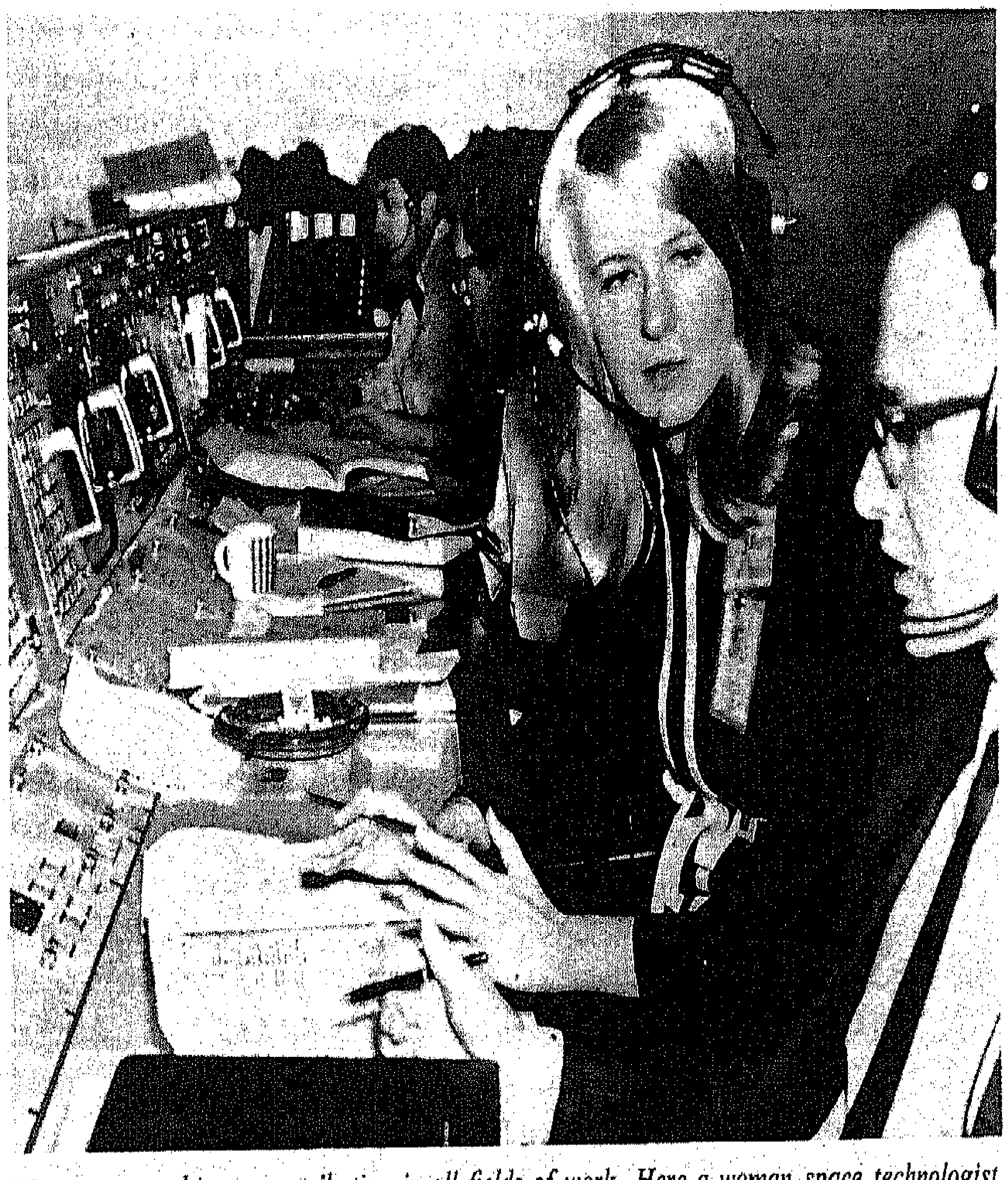
> *Observing a singular-looking, 'long-low black' wagon passing along a street, we made inquiries respecting it, and were informed that it was what we term a 'slaver.' She makes regular trips to the north of the state cruising around in Vermont and New Hampshire, with a 'commander' whose heart must be as black as his craft, who is paid a dollar a head for all he brings to the market, and more in proportion to the distance—if they bring them from such a distance that they cannot easily get back.*

Despite the negative and unflattering stories told about factory work, the agents had no trouble finding willing workers. The jobs offered to many young women an escape from the boredom and isolation of rural farm life. Several years' wages earned and saved also helped pay off family debts on the farm and in some instances provided a dowry.

Once they arrived in the mill towns, the girls were assigned to boarding houses, subsidized or operated by the mill operatives, where they lived under highly regimented rules. They were required to be in their rooms by 10 p.m.; no guests were allowed at "unseasonable hours;" and they were required to attend church on Sunday. No "ardent spirits" were allowed in the boarding houses and a girl suspected of drinking, dancing or other questionable conduct was evicted or punished. In Chicopee, a factory town in western Massachusetts, a candy peddler was forced to discontinue his visits to the town because the factory manager did not want "his girls" to spend their money on sweets, which he considered an extravagance.

The employment of young girls may have resulted almost as much from the predominant religious beliefs of Puritan New England, as from the need to maintain a captive labor force. The French traveler, Michel Chevalier, noted this Puritan influence when he described Lowell, Massachusetts, a typical factory town in the 1830's. "Lowell is not amusing, but Lowell is clean and decent, peaceful and sober."

The conditions of work in the factories were as spartan as the living conditions of the mills' boarding houses. The work day started at 5 a.m. and ended at 7:30 p.m., with two one-half hour breaks provided for



Women are making a contribution in all fields of work. Here a woman space technologist works with other technologists in NASA's space center.

breakfast and dinner. During summer months when natural sunlight lengthened the daylight hours, work continued longer. For these long hours, six days a week, workers were paid from $2.50 to $3.00 a week, with $1.25 deducted for room and board. Furthermore wages were paid at infrequent intervals, sometimes only twice a year.

The girls protested the living and working conditions despite the wages and the attractions of life in a factory town. They were especially incensed at the crowded tenements where they were often forced to live, "six to a room." The girls petitioned to the State Legislature of Massachusetts for shorter work days and higher wages. They also banded together to protest wage cuts in the 1830's. On one occasion in 1834 the "factory girls" were ostracized by the townspeople of Lowell for their lack of propriety when they marched around the town to protest a cut in wages. Later an increase in the price of board brought forth similar demonstrations. Added to wages, longer hours and increased board were complaints against other abuses of the Waltham System: employment of children, lack of educational facilities and insufficient leisure time.

By 1850 the "Yankee" girls from New England farms were being replaced in the factories. Girls from French Canada, Irish immigrants, forced to work at substandard wages, were recruited by the thousands. The Waltham System with its employment of Yankee farm girls remains an important, but forgotten, chapter in the industrialization of America.

Oh, sing me the song of the Factory Girl!
Link not her name with the Slave's;
She is brave and free, as the old elm tree
Which over her homestead waves.
She tends the loom, she watches the spindle,
And scorns the laugh and the sneer,
I know by her lip, and her bright eyes kindle,
That a free born spirit is here.

The irony of this ballad is all the more apparent when applied to the immigrant, who unlike the "Yankee Girl," could not escape to her home and family or to a farm bought in the new west with her own savings. The large numbers of immigrants from Germany, Ireland and other European countries decreased the demand for workers, depressed factory wages and worsened conditions of employment. Long hours, ten to fourteen hours a day, six days a week; wages so low that it required a whole family to earn a decent income; hazardous work conditions; and squalid living conditions in slums and ghettos; this was the lot of the factory worker.

In many mills child labor predominated which further depressed wages. Nearly 100 years passed before comfortable middle class Americans were made aware of the wretchedness of the toiling millions or heard *The Bitter Cry of the Children.* The 19th century had ended before the reformer Sarah Cleghorn sarcastically penned the lines:

The Golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The laboring children can look out
See the men at play.

Or Louis Untermeyer would write about the plight of the underground mine workers, many of whom were children.

God, we don't like to complain,
We know that the mine is no lark,
But—there's the pools from the rain;
But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, you don't know what it is—
You, in your well lighted sky—
Watching the meteors whizz;
Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if you had but the moon,
Stuck in your cap for a lamp,
Even you'd tire of it soon,
Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
And nothing that moves but the cars...
God, if you wish for our love,
*Fling us a handful of stars.**

The growth of the factory system did not eliminate completely the need for skilled craftsmen or self-employed workers, especially in sections of rural America. One need only examine the description of villages and towns in state gazeteers published in the 19th century to get a picture of the variety of trades and professions. The small village of Romeo,

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Michigan northeast of Detroit is described in 1863 as having the following craftsmen: carpenter, shoe and boot maker, carriage maker, blacksmith, mason, milliner, cooper, gunsmith, cabinet maker, stone cutter, harness maker, portrait painter, and daguerrotypist. Several physicians, attorneys, hotel keepers and a druggist, confectioner and dentist were also listed as Romeo residents in the *Michigan Gazeteer*, of 1863.

As more and larger factories were built in post-Civil War America, however, the social environment of workers also changed. No longer was it commonplace for the worker to know, or ever meet the factory owner, nor did the factory manager know his employees. The length of the work day, which in 1863 had averaged from 12 to 14 hours was shortened as the workers' movement for an 8-hour day gained recognition, and as employers realized that long, exhausting work days were not economical.

The popular Horatio Alger "rags to riches" stories of the late 19th century were not typical of the factory worker, who was resigned to a life's work in a factory, moving to another town and to another factory when the life became intolerable. The emerging mass production techniques which brought great progress to American industry and made the United States an industrial giant, also completed the dehumanization and degradation of the worker. The alienation and disenchantment of workers which was to continue through the next century and longer had its roots with the institution of mass production in the late 19th century.

A study of one of the oldest crafts in America, the making of shoes, will illustrate the dramatic impact of the machine on employment in America. In his excellent study of colonial craftsmen, historian Carl Bridenbaugh described the activities of a group of cordwainers of Lynn, Massachusetts who had wrested control of the shoe market from nearby Boston. By 1767 Lynn cordwainers produced 80,000 pairs of women's shoes per year and completely dominated colonial shoe production. Lynn continued to be the center of shoe production; by 1850 the machine had replaced the "awl, the bristle and thread, the lapstone and hammer and plenty of elbow grease.... " An observer noted in 1864 that "the little shoemakers' benches are passing rapidly away, soon to be known no more among us, and the immense factory with its laboring steam engine and its busy hum of whirling wheels is rising upon the whole face of things in this ancient and honored metropolis of the workers in the gentle craft of leather."

Thirty-five years later, a worker testifying before a congressional commission described even further the impressive effect of machines:

> *Eleven years ago I used to be able to earn myself, lasting shoes, from $18 to $35 in a week, according to how hard I wanted to work.... Today I would not be able to make over $15, and probably my wage would run nearer $12.*

He continued his testimony:

> *In respect to the operation of nailing the heel to the boot of the shoe, fastening the heel with nails, about fifteen years ago I remember working at a factory where that operation was done by hand in the original way. A man stood with a hammer and nailed those heels on, and 100 to 125 pairs of that grade of work was considered a good day's work. Five years later it is done by what they call the National Nailing Machine, where a man and a boy did as much. That man and that boy did the work that it would require five men to do ....*

Child labor also captured the attention of the shoe worker testifying:

> *I have seen small children standing on boxes because they were not tall enough to stand up to a man's work bench and operate machines .... There was one instance in Marlboro where a man was receiving $2.00 a day; the firm turned him off and put his son at $1.00, at the same job.*

The 20th century brought other major changes to industrial production. The development of mass production techniques in steel, rubber, metals, mining, chemicals, food processing and the needle trades similarly revolutionized the American economy. The introduction of the automobile and in 1913 the beginning of the moving assembly line at the Ford Motor Company ushered in a new age of industry. Again new waves of immigrants from abroad, especially from eastern and southern Europe, swelled the population rolls and provided the needed thousands of unskilled workers. High speed machinery, accompanied by repetitive and monotonous work assignments led to hundreds of industrial accidents. In 1913, for example, there were more than 100,000 industrial injuries and more than 25,000 deaths attributed to such accidents. Without special programs to care for these people injured or made ill by the industrial system the cost in human misery was incalculable.

New techniques involving the use of chemistry and electricity in the 1920's further transformed American industry. The latter freed factory locations, which were no longer tied to swift flowing rivers or adjacent coal fields. Scientific management, pioneered by Frank Gilbreth and Frederick W. Taylor who fathered "Time and Motion" studies, translated efficiency into terms of unit costs and output. The application of these principles turned factory workers into dehumanized automatons, who required even fewer skills and were involved in endless repetitive jobs. Productivity efficiency and bigness became the major goals of business and in the process the worker was further dehumanized. The factory worker lost all control over his job. The pace of his work and the inability to exercise any meaningful influence over the assembly line led to widespread futility and increasing resentment on his part.

Very few corporations have tried to humanize the assembly line and curb the excesses of "Taylorism", except a few prodded by experiments in Europe. The result has been ferment and conflict exemplified by the great sit-down strikes of the 1930's to the wildcat strikes of the 1970's at the General Motors Plant in Lordstown, Ohio, the "newest and most efficient auto plant in America."

Other developments, resulting from the drive for size and efficiency, have led to alienation of workers. At one time, American workers were wedded to the belief that they controlled their own destinies and that through hard work and self sacrifice they could some day attain their goals of the "American Dream" of "going into business for themselves." Farmers, too, another element of the American work force, held on tenaciously to the same belief and hope. Throughout the 20th century workers' chances of becoming self-employed declined as large corporations and government increasingly dominated the work force. Statistics support this conclusion. In the early 1900's "less than half of the work force" worked for wages or salaries; by 1950 eighty percent were in this category and by 1970 more than 90 percent. Only 9 percent of the work force was self-employed in 1970. This trend affected not just factory workers but other occupations such as managers, officials, proprietors, and farmers among whom salary and wage earners increased from 61 percent in 1950 to 80 percent in 1960. The era of the small independent farmer and craftsman, self-employed and in control of his livelihood has largely disappeared from the American scene. One might ask the question, does the work ethic any longer have meaning for Americans?

Organization of the Labor Force

In 1972 more than 23 million workers were members of the nation's 212 labor unions and employee associations—approximately one out of every four of the total work force. Today labor unions are recognized as one of the most influential institutions in American society. To many persons, they represent a threat which must be controlled; to others they offer the only counter force to big business. Some supporters see unions as the vehicle through which utopian social changes can be wrought in our society. To millions of workers labor unions offer dignity and job security.

Labor unions did not suddenly spring up or develop during the 1930's or under more recent Democratic administrations. They were the product of a long evolutionary process dating back to the eighteenth century. Unions were founded, and achieved recognition only after bitter struggles with employers and often as a result of great personal sacrifices of a few workers. Violence often accompanied the organization of a new union.

The earliest labor organizations were in existence prior to the signing of the American Declaration of Independence. Skilled craftsmen and artisans of colonial towns banded together in benevolent societies to aid their members and families in the event of accident or emergency. Although they differed from modern labor unions they did represent unified efforts to act collectively.

Later printers, bootmakers, tailors and other craftsmen joined together in organizations to improve conditions of work and to fight reductions in wages and work standards. This trend was hastened by economic developments following the American Revolution when merchants sought to cut costs of products by hiring less qualified workers and to divide the functions of the particular craft. Skilled "master" craftsmen viewed such developments with alarm for it represented a downgrading of their positions. They formed unions to protect their status, work conditions and wages. Their objective was a "closed" shop which provided that only recognized members of the crafts union could perform this work.

The records of the early craft unions have not endured but there is evidence that such organizations representing shoemakers, and printers and carpenters existed in Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston in the 1790's. The first recorded meeting between shoemakers and employers to discuss work conditions took place in Philadelphia in 1799. Printing crafts engaged in similar meetings at about the same time in Philadelphia and New York. There is evidence too that craftsmen struck to win better working conditions in the early years of the 19th century. Bakers, tailors, cabinet makers, weavers, nailers, typographers, and other craftsmen also formed unions.

The joining of groups of craft unions within a city was a logical outgrowth of unionization. By 1820 central labor bodies formed in many cities and met frequently to exchange information and pool efforts to improve working conditions. It was not until the 1850's that crafts responding to the growing size and power of corporations found the leadership and strength to organize into nationwide unions. In 1852 the National Typographical Union was formed and by the end of the decade similar organizations had been created representing stone cutters, hat finishers, molders, and machinists.

The American Civil War accelerated the formation of unions both on a local and national level. By 1870 there were more than 29 national craft unions, and by 1900, 120 were in existence. As in other times of war and prosperity there was less resistance to unions by businessmen concerned with war production goals.

Once the fighting was over and the union persisted, employers mounted a strong campaign against organized labor. Immigrant labor often hired under contract in Europe was introduced and used whenever possible and union members fired. The most powerful allies of the employers were the courts of the land. Under the English common law doctrine which stated that "combinations of workers to raise wages could be regarded as a conspiracy against the public," unions were prosecuted as "conspiracies in restraint of trade." This court doctrine had been used widely and successfully against unions in the early 19th century and unquestionably hindered union growth. In 1806, for example, the members of the Philadelphia Journeymen Cordwainers were tried for criminal conspiracy after striking for higher wages. The union was found guilty of conspiracy and fined; without financial resources to fight the charge, it disbanded.

The situation slowly began to change. As early as 1842, in a monumental decision that year the Supreme Court of Massachusetts ruled in *Commonwealth vs. Hunt*, that labor unions, as such, were legal and that "a conspiracy must be a combination of two or more persons, by some concerted action to accomplish some criminal or unlawful purpose . . . . " The Massachusetts decision was heralded as a great victory for unions. But even in the post-Civil War years not all courts had accepted the spirit of the *Commonwealth vs. Hunt* decision.

The rapid industrialization of America after the Civil War and the growth of large corporate empires led to a widespread movement for the unification of labor groups throughout the country resulting in the establishment in 1866 of a National Labor Union. The 8-hour day movement, long an objective of labor organizations, was one of the main aims of the National Labor Union. Headed by William H. Sylvis of the Molder's Union, the leadership of the new organization backed producer cooperatives as a means of freeing workers from "the control of capitalism." This was not the first time that workers had turned to politics to achieve better working conditions. As early as 1828 the American Workingmen's Party had been formed and adopted a platform calling for the 10-hour work day, free public education, mechanic lien laws, the abolishment of imprisonment for debt, chartered monopolies, public lotteries, and compulsory military service.

The National Labor Union, deeply committed to political action, fared no better than the American Workingmen's Party. It suffered the fate of third party efforts in the United States and it disbanded in 1872 although during its brief existence it made some headway in supporting state and federal legislation. Its association with the Greenback Party facilitated its demise and made many union leaders wary of too close an association with political parties.

More important in the history of the American labor movement was the founding of the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor in 1869. At first it functioned as a secret society with elaborate rituals, in part to protect its members from employer blacklists, but as it grew it became publically aggressive. From an estimated membership of 10,000 in 1879, the Knights claimed more than 700,000 members in 1886. Organized on a local or district basis its members included physicians, lawyers, bankers, liquor dealers, professional gamblers and stock brokers. The basic aim of the order was the replacement of a competitive society by a cooperative one which would give the workers the opportunity to enjoy fully the wealth they created, to be achieved by reducing the "money power" of banks and through self employment of workers. The Knights also fought for the 8-hour day, equal pay for women, abolition of convict and child labor, public ownership of utilities, the establishment of cooperatives and temperance and land reform. These objectives were to be achieved through political and educational programs rather than by collective bargaining and strikes. The decline of the Knights ended for the moment, labor's effort to elevate itself into the middle class. It was also to be a long time before a serious effort to organize the unskilled was again undertaken.

The American Federation of Labor, in contrast to the Knights of Labor, was not interested in political reforms, producer cooperatives, or politics. On the contrary, the AFL strongly opposed the involvement of labor in such areas and came to distrust government actions on behalf of workers. This philosophy was aptly stated in 1906 by Samuel Gompers, the first and long time president of the AFL, who was singularly the most important individual in the American labor movement. "The trade unions are the business organizations of the wage earners, to attend to the business of the wage earners." Repeatedly, Gompers cautioned workers to look to their labor union, not government for help, that political action resulted in the downfall of labor unions, that the extent of political involvement should be to reward your friends and punish your enemies at the voting polls. Gompers stressed it as axiomatic that when government entered a labor dispute it would be on the side of the corporation and against the working man. The best the American worker could hope for, he insisted, was for the government to remain neutral. Basically, the

AFL was a conservative organization, accepting the American free enterprise, capitalistic system. It fought for "respectability" and a place in American society.

By firm policy, the AFL limited its membership to the skilled trades, believing that the unskilled and semiskilled workers could not be organized effectively. It was committed to this "exclusive jurisdiction of its affiliated national and international unions" and it viewed its role as protecting such sovereignties, and mediating disputes between its affiliates.

Overlooked by the AFL in its emphasis upon the craft unions were the millions of unskilled and semi-skilled workers who after the turn of the century represented an increasing majority of the work force. There were numerous attempts to challenge the AFL domination of the movement but most failed. The communists tried to gain positions of influence and power within the union and the socialists tried to convert the labor movement to its own particular philosophy. The latter group found a most dynamic and articulate spokesman in Eugene V. Debs, president of the American Railway Union and leader of the famous Pullman Strike of 1894. Debs successfully organized a powerful industrial union of railroad workers and then saw his union destroyed by the combined power of the railroad, the General Managers Association and the United States government.

A more successful attempt to organize unskilled workers was led by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), founded in 1905. This colorful and influential union, often referred to as a "union on wheels" was founded by several dissident labor groups and reformers, and was pledged to the concept of "One Big Union," to include all workers, skilled and unskilled alike, and dedicated to the "abolition of the wage system," and the overthrow of the capitalist system. Although the IWW never attracted large numbers of members, it did leave its mark upon the American labor movement in a variety of ways. It won important strikes, such as the Lawrence Textile Strike in 1912; conducted free speech fights throughout the United States and carried the idea of a union to the poorest of American working people; it gave the movement a folk hero, Joe Hill, a labor martyr and balladeer. It developed a cadre of union organizers and leaders who later assisted in the organization of industrial unions during the 1930's. Although the IWW is still in existence, its influence in the labor movement was seriously curtailed by a vigorous government campaign during and following World War I, which led to the arrest, imprisonment and deportation of many of its leaders.

Government harassment of unions was not limited to the IWW, however. A series of strikes: the Seattle General Strike, the Steel Strike and the Boston Police Strike, all in 1919, led to a strong government action

against unions and those union leaders who were "associated" with the "radical fringe." The fact that many labor leaders were foreign born, and because the Russian Revolution was in the news, led to a wave of hysteria, characterized as the "Big Red Scare." The widespread use of labor spies, the establishment of company unions and the use of the "yellow dog" contract, whereby workers as a condition of employment, agreed not to join a union, all contributed in the 1920's to the decline of unions. Union membership dropped from 5,000,000 in 1920 to 3,600,000 in 1930.

It is significant that despite the severe economic conditions of the 1930's which swelled the ranks of the unemployed to the millions, it was during this period that labor saw its greatest gains. The unionization of the mass production industries, the support of the federal government, which changed from open hostility to "positive encouragement," led to the strengthening of organized labor. Membership rose sharply and the political power of unions became a potent force in the life of the nation.

The Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932, ended the era of government by injunction, limited the judicial restrictions upon strikes, picketing and boycotts. The legislation also outlawed "yellow dog" contracts and drastically curtailed penalties against unions for unlawful actions of its members of offices.

The administration of Franklin Roosevelt gave even greater assistance to unions. Congress, on the premise that the American worker lacked adequate purchasing power and that organized labor was weak compared to big business, sought to redress the imbalance and aid labor through a series of congressional measures. The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), passed in 1933, gave the President power to regulate working conditions. Under Section 7A of this act employees were guaranteed the right to organize into unions and to bargain collectively with employers through representatives of their own choosing.

When the NIRA was struck down by the Supreme Court, Senator Robert F. Wagner salvaged the heart of its labor provisions by expanding Article 7A into the National Labor Relations Act. President Roosevelt, who had previously been somewhat hostile toward organized labor saw the possibilities of a new political coalition and supported the Wagner Act. The Wagner Act, passed in July, 1935, is the most significant labor law ever enacted. It guaranteed employees "the right to self organization, to form, join or assist in labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing. . . . " It further created the National Labor Relations Board with authority to: (1) prohibt unfair labor practices which discouraged unionization or collective bargaining; and (2) determine the bargaining units in case of controversy and hold secret representative elections to decide which union, if any, the employees wanted to represent them.

During this period when organized labor was winning support from Congress, there was a sharp internal struggle going on within the American Federation of Labor. The controversy involved the issue of organizing unskilled industrial workers into labor unions. The AFL leadership supported the long standing position that such workers could not be organized. Furthermore the AFL maintained that workers, for the most part, must be organized on a craft or occupational basis, not on an industry wide basis. Another split developed over the role of organized labor in politics. The conservative forces within the AFL wanted labor to concentrate upon collective bargaining, whereas the dissident union leaders wanted unions to actively enter the political arena, and fight for social legislation and support pro-labor candidates.

The controversy came to the fore at the 1934 Convention of the AFL and was resolved for the moment when the delegates authorized the Federation to issue charters "to national and international unions in the automotive, cement, aluminum and other mass productive industries. . . . " The convention supported the principle that the jurisdictional rights of existing trade unions would be recognized.

The jurisdictional dispute was not easily settled and again in 1935 it brought forth an acrimonious floor fight. The conservative forces of the AFL won the convention battle, but six weeks later six AFL affiliated unions and the officers of other AFL unions formed the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), with the stated purpose of organizing workers in the mass production industries. When the group refused to heed the demands of AFL leaders to disband, they were ejected from the AFL. Thus the CIO became an independent labor organization under the brilliant and fiery leadership of John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers.

Under Lewis's lead, the CIO aided the unionization of the mass productive industries. In 1937, after tumultuous and bitter sit-down strikes the General Motors and Chrysler corporations recognized the United Automobile Workers. United States Steel took similar action and soon afterwards the rubber, electrical and radio manufacturing industries, and part of the maritime industry followed suit. At the same time AFL affiliated unions won key battles with business and expanded their power. By 1940 union membership had jumped to more than 8,000,000 members, an increase from 3,600,000 in 1930. Of the civilian labor force, 14.6 percent came from the ranks of organized labor.

World War II brought another period of cooperation between organized labor and business and government. They worked together on the War Manpower Commission, the National War Labor Board and other government committees to maximize the American war effort. Most major unions supported a "no strike" pledge in return for a promise by management of "no lockouts." The spirit of cooperation also stimulated the growth of unions. Between 1940 and 1945, membership rose sharply to 15,000,000 workers; about one out of every three non-agricultural workers belonged to a union.

Although wages were controlled during wartime, labor won substantial gains for its members—increases in overtime pay, paid vacations, premium pay for night work, employer subsidized health insurance plans and other fringe benefits. Many of the gains set patterns for postwar collective bargaining.

The end of hostilities in Europe and Asia and the conversion to a peacetime economy had serious repercussions upon organized labor and the American worker. Millions of veterans were released from the service and returned to the job market. War factories, such as the Willow Run bomber plant in Ypsilanti, Michigan were closed, throwing thousands of workers out of work; overtime pay was eliminated. Workers, restive under wage controls and with a no strike pledge, were eager to win more equitable wages and better working conditions. The mood of the American worker was reflected in a series of strikes beginning before the end of hostilities and accelerating after 1945. Major strikes occurred in the coal, automobile, electrical, maritime and railroad industries. The strike at General Motors, led by Walter Reuther in 1945, for example, idled more than 200,000 automobile workers.

Increased wages were only one of the gains won by labor in postwar years. Life insurance and hospitalization and income disability plans were introduced into the contracts. By 1962, 90 percent of the members of industrial unions were protected by some form of insurance policies; 65 percent of the same group of workers were covered by plans to protect their incomes in case of physical disability; and more than 70 percent of the industrial workers were under pension plans. Paid vacations and holidays, provisions for lost time to attend funerals and jury duty became permanent employee benefits of union contracts.

The imaginative supplementary unemployment benefit plan negotiated between the UAW and the Ford Motor Company, called "SUB," set a precedent which spread to other unions. Under the provisions of the Supplementary Unemployment Benefit plan, laid-off workers received extra benefits to supplement the regular unemployment compensation for a given number of weeks. During the economic recession of 1974-75 unemployed auto workers received as much as 95 percent of their regular take-home pay under SUB. These plans undoubtedly have been a major stabilizing force in our current recession economy. The UAW also pioneered a plan by which a worker with 30 years experience in the auto industry could retire and collect pension benefits early. "Thirty years and out" has become a popular motto of the workers in the 1970's.

Among the other gains won by organized labor were: safer and better working conditions, more acceptable and equitable shop rules, fairer work schedules, overtime provisions, grievance and arbitration procedures, higher wages and longer vacations. One of the most innovative provisions in wage bargaining was incorporated in the 1948 agreement between the UAW and General Motors. It established a formula tied to productivity increases and changes in consumer prices. Thus, as the cost of living increased, as it has steadily since 1948, the worker automatically received an adjustment in his pay check. The cost of living increase protected the worker against inflation. Other corporations quickly followed the lead of General Motors and the UAW with the cost of living benefit in worker contracts.

The wave of strikes in 1946 and the widespread publicity given to the undemocratic practices and racketeering of some unions, led many people to believe that organized labor had become too powerful and had to be controlled. The passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, over a presidential veto, reflected the public sentiment for curbing certain union practices. Called the "Slave Labor Act" by union leaders, the Act outlawed the "closed shop"; listed a series of unfair labor practices for unions; compelled unions to register and file financial reports; and provided that union officials must sign non-communist affidavits. The Taft-Hartley measure also gave the President power to stop strikes for a specified period of time as a "cooling off" period to protect the national interest. Later in 1959 Congress passed the Landrum-Griffin Act, designed to curb corruption in labor unions. To many, the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin acts balanced the pro-labor legislation of the Wagner Act.

The effects of the Taft-Hartley Act are debatable. It did not curb the growth of organized labor, but union leaders charged that it impeded the growth of the unionization of unorganized workers, especially in the South. The legislation, along with the growing anti-labor sentiment and an unsympathetic administration in the White House under President Eisenhower, hastened a merger of the AFL and the CIO. The House of Labor was formally reunited in 1955 as the AFL-CIO, with George Meany as its president. Sixteen million workers, representing 85 percent of all union members, were a part of the new labor organization.

The merger did not solve all of the problems facing organized labor, and in fact, in the two decades afterwards, labor has faced some of its

most difficult challenges. A number of major unions such as the Teamsters, and the National Education Association, have not come into the fold. In 1968, the powerful United Automobile Workers, under the leadership of Walter Reuther, left the AFL-CIO in protest against its policies and the leadership of George Meany.

The economic recession of the late 1950's and the early 1970's seriously restricted the power and influence of organized labor. Inflation cut deeply into the real wages of workers and an increasing number of workers joined the ranks of the unemployed. Thousands have faced the bleak prospect of never rejoining the work force.

The position of the black worker in the work force and in unions has improved considerably in the past three decades, but much more progress lies ahead. Blacks had an extremely difficult time in making their "journey from agrarianism to urbanism," as the labor historian, Thomas Brooks noted in describing the plight of the black worker. The pro-labor legislation of the New Deal and the formation of the CIO aided blacks; in fact, many black workers played prominent roles in the creation of industrial unions. One must also give great credit to A. Philip Randolph, the great labor leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, who did so much to raise the position of black workers. Yet great injustices still exist. The black worker, especially the unskilled, is usually the "last hired and the first fired," and has been successfully kept out of many craft unions. The formation of Black Caucuses within unions, has won gains and positions of leadership for their members. Many black leaders still feel that some traditional union practices, such as seniority, prevent their achieving equity within the system.

Union membership has risen sharply in particular areas. The Teamsters have pushed membership to near the 2,000,000 mark; and other unions reporting gains since 1960 are the Electrical Workers (IBEW), retail clerks, service employees, letter carriers, and communications workers. The greatest growth of union membership is among public employees. By 1972, 1,400,000 employees of the federal government had enrolled in unions, while on the state level the union ranks included 1,100,000 state and local government workers. Employee associations claimed an additional 2,100,000 government employees as members.

The fastest growing union in the United States is the American Federation of State, Country, and Municipal Employees, led by Jerry Wurf. Under his presidency which began in 1964, the ranks of AFSCME have swelled from under 240,000 to more than 700,000 in 1975. Wurf's union organizes nurses, librarians, sanitation workers, hospital employees, grave diggers, policemen, architects, psychiatrists, zoo keepers, and various other state and local public servants.

Teachers too, have increased their strength significantly in recent years. Aggressive organizational campaigns by rival teacher unions, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, has had a great impact upon the unionization of this group of white collar employees. The militancy of teachers also marked a sharp change from their earlier role. A recent *New York Times* editorial summed up this new position when it noted that "teachers are no longer content to rule only in the classroom to which they are assigned. They want a hand in the assignment and a voice in the policy that controls their professional lives."

The decades since the merger of the AFL-CIO has also witnessed the first successful attempt to organize farm workers. The IWW and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union had made inroads earlier in the century and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) was established in 1959 by the AFL-CIO. It was not until Cesar Chavez appeared on the scene in 1965, that the California migratory workers were welded together into an effective union. After long months of careful organizing, Chavez won victories over table grapes growers, wineries, and other farmers, mostly in California. Since the farm workers were not covered by the protective features of the National Labor Relations Act, no representative elections were required to determine which union, if any, workers wanted to represent them. Taking advantage of this gap in the labor law, the Teamsters signed agreements with the growers described by the Supreme Court of California as "sweetheart contracts." In the 1970's they mounted a massive campaign to replace the United Farm Workers. Chavez's international boycott of non-UFW grapes, wines and lettuce has brought to the attention of millions of Americans the plight of the farm workers. In the summer of 1975 California legislation provided for free elections by farm workers to determine what union, if any, will represent them. Regardless of the outcome, the work of Cesar Chavez and his dedicated staff of volunteers, will stand as one of the great chapters in the history of the American labor movement.

The so-called "work ethic" was a basic tenet in American philosophy ever since colonial times. If human beings were to better themselves, they could do it only through work. A family working together on their farm is a common sight.

Thus 1975 found the American labor movement at a crossroads in its development. Its membership is in excess of 23,000,000 members, representing one out of every five non-agricultural workers. Women, as of 1972, make up more than 4,500,000 of the union membership, more than 20 percent of the union members. Because of the changes in the economy, inflation, recession and widespread unemployment as well as the impact of automation and new sources of energy, the future of organized labor is not easy to predict with accuracy. In reviewing the conditions of the worker over the past 200 years, it is obvious, even to opponents of labor unions, that organized labor has had a great impact upon the lives of not only its members but society at large, and to a considerable degree has been beneficial.

Work and the Quality of Life in America

A study of the American "work ethic" and the organization of the labor force over the past 200 years gives clearer perspective to the important, controversial and basic issues relating to the world of work and the quality of life in the United States today. Many observers of American society view with deep alarm the apparently changing attitudes of American workers toward their jobs, and the existing free enterprise system.

The disenchantment of millions of Americans with their jobs is deep rooted and sincere. Older workers, who have been a part of the work force for decades, are concerned for their future and their wish to play a useful role in society. The trend of early retirement; the attack on the seniority system, the bulwark of labor unions; and the increased number of the population over 65 give cause for alarm. In 1900 a majority of men aged sixty-five and over were working; seventy years later this proportion had dropped to less than twenty-five percent. Many factory workers over 40, who have been victims of the layoff, have discovered that their chances for reemployment are most highly questionable. The impact of such a revelation upon the unemployed worker is devastating. The loss of the pay check is matched only by their loss of self esteem. In the summer of 1975 the *New York Times* reported that a great many marriages were having difficulties surviving the recession-based unemployment.

Young workers also view the work places with a jaundiced eye. Many find it almost impossible to break into the job market, especially during periods of recession and widespread unemployment. But once in a job, they often become alienated. They dislike the authoritarianism of the factory or office; they fear that job mobility is lacking or albeit, restricted; and they find much of the work dull and uninteresting. They have little commitment to their job. They view with equal suspicion the business for which they work and the labor union which represents them. Leisure time or the size of the pay check is frequently more important than fringe benefits and the seniority system is viewed by some as an obstacle to advancement.

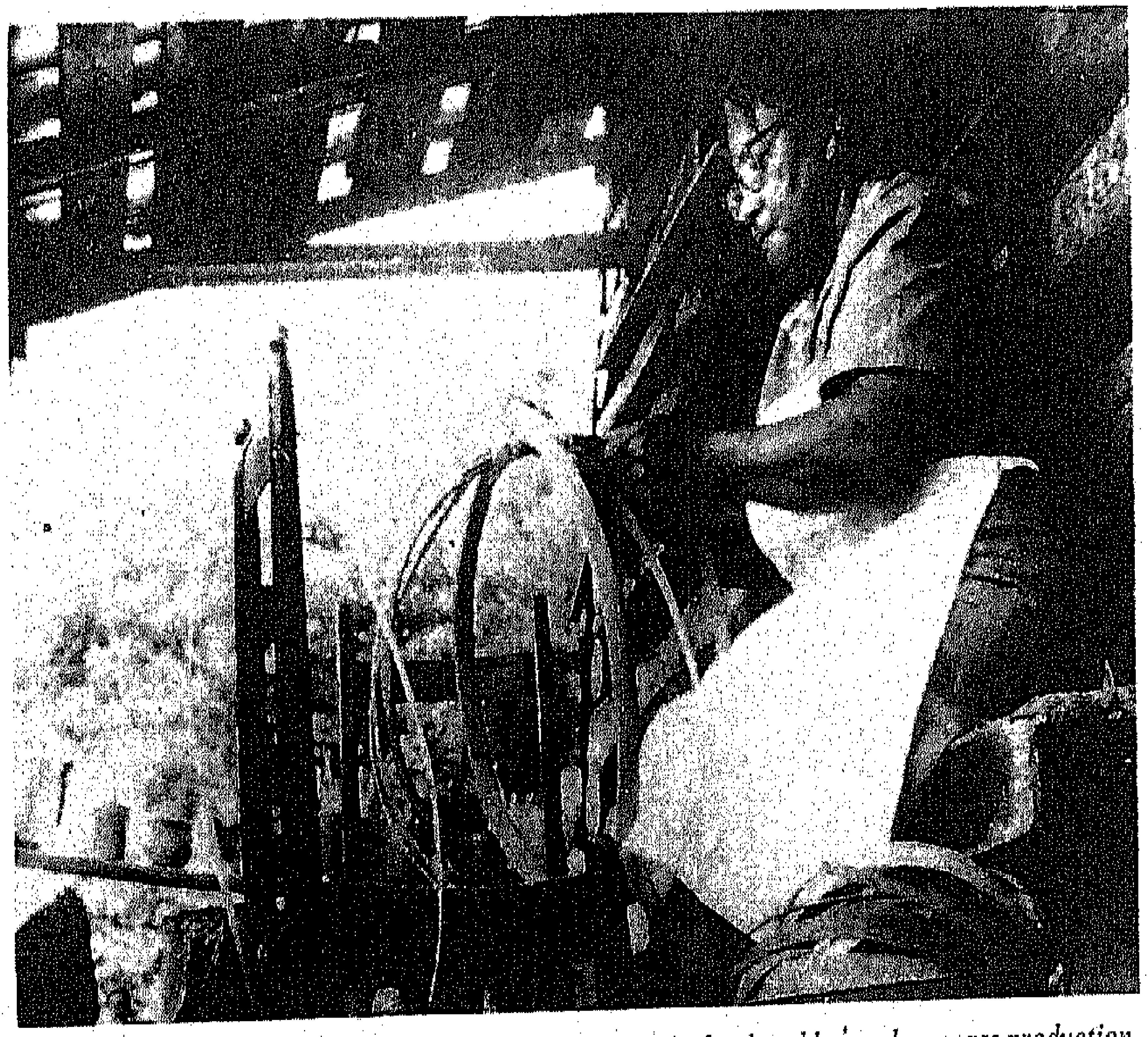
Minorities, including women, hold deep seated resentment against traditional practices of the work place. They have to fight against prejudices in hiring and advancement and many of the jobs which are available to them are demeaning and offer low status, despite equal employment opportunity legislation and affirmative action programs. Job satisfaction remains a major goal for all workers since job alienation and dissatisfaction is not limited to the young or old, or the minorities. It affects all groups within the work force. Blue collar "blues" is matched by the disillusionment of white collar workers. Professional workers and middle management find that high salaries are not the sole ingredients of job satisfaction.

The employment of both parents has had a serious impact upon the traditional American family. Although the practice of a whole family—husband, wife and children—working, dates back to the colonial period, the increasing employment of women has been especially noticeable since the beginning of World War II, when they demonstrated that they could perform many jobs heretofore restricted to males. The new work opportunities, coupled with the desire to escape the low status and drudgery of housework, as well as the need for supplemental family income, has hastened this trend. In many families, it is essential for husband and wife to work to meet the necessities of life.

For similar economic reasons, many individuals are forced to hold more than one job. Factory workers, teachers, car salesmen and a variety of others work multiple shifts of 12 to 16 hours a day. Farmers, too, are often forced to hold a second job to supplement income. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century farmers in many sections of the United States spent their winters in the woods as lumberjacks. Later farmers combined crop and animal raising with an assembly line shift in a nearby factory. The cost of living and the skyrocketing inflation of the 1970's have only increased the trend of the multiple job kind of employment.

Labor unions have had difficulty coping with the attitudes of their members toward their jobs just as business is perplexed by the same attitudes. Decreased productivity, worker discontent, increased absenteeism even during the heights of economic recession, give cause for alarm. State and federal government leaders have created special task forces to study the problem and offer remedies.

Some critics of the American economy argue cogently that the American work ethic, as it has developed over the past three centuries is no longer meaningful. They point to early retirement, the growth in the number of communes, the panhandling practices of teenagers, reduced productivity,



Hand made goods and cottage industries, though largely displaced by modern mass production, now are making a strong comeback.

and the rise of absenteeism as evidence to support this conclusion. Workers, they maintain, want to become the "masters of their environment," to escape from the authoritarianism of the work place and to feel that their work, and they themselves, are important—the true ingredients of self esteem.

Many critics call for a redesign of jobs; others urge a return to the work conditions of our earlier era when workers controlled their own destinies and saw the immediate results of their endeavors. Recognizing the validity of some of these criticisms and the widespread alienation of workers from all segments of the work force, some business firms today are experimenting with new methods of production, in which the worker is more involved in the decisions which affect him. Some companies are turning abroad to business firms in Europe to study the results of experiments there.

Not only is worker alienation a serious problem today but equally so is widespread unemployment which is prevalent in our society. Influenced by the values of the work ethic, one's status in American society is determined by whether one is working, the nature of the job and the compensation for it. As a general rule "higher paid individuals are thought by many to have greater personal worth than those receiving less pay." Thus at the "bottom of this scale, a person without pay becomes worthless." Curiously our society also places a stigma upon the wealthy who choose a life of leisure rather than some form of employment.

Work and Welfare

The widespread acceptance of the system of determining worth has exacerbated the problem of welfare aid in our society. From the earliest days of settlement in the American colonies, communities have had to cope with the problem of assisting persons who could not care for themselves. These aid programs operated on a community wide basis, with "poor laws" and "poor houses" until the 1930's when the Congress enacted Social Security legislation to provide aid to the blind, the aged, the disabled and families with dependent children. Originally the latter program was designed "to make it possible for widows and mothers without employable husbands to stay at home and raise their children." In recent years the whole welfare system, but especially the aid to dependents aspect has come under attack. According to one recent study prepared by a task force of experts for the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under the auspices of the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research *(Work in America)* the general public entertained "a host of unverified assumptions about the character and composition of the welfare population: most poor people don't want to work; most people on welfare are Black; welfare mothers have babies to increase their welfare benefits; people on welfare live well and easy; most people on welfare want to be on welfare, etc."

Despite the fact that "each one of these assumptions is demonstrably false as a generalization and is true only in the occasional particular . . ." there is widespread acceptance of this view, which is consistent with the American work ethic. The controversy, which has already become an inflammatory political issue on the local and state level will undoubtedly be debated in the forthcoming presidential election.

The inflammatory controversy over the welfare system is a major issue in communities throughout the country today. The criticism of the system has also had its impact upon the recipients of such assistance. Many experts trace the sharp increase in family and marital deterioration to the welfare system. The health, both mental and physical, of welfare recipients also has been affected.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Jerold S. Auerbach, ed., *American Labor: The Twentieth Century* (Indianapolis. Bobbs-Merrill, 1969). An anthology of carefully selected first person accounts of 20th century working conditions, utilizing a wide variety of sources, including congressional testimony, court decisions, committee reports and letters. **ND/B/C/M**

Daniel Bell, *Work and its Discontents, The Cult of Efficiency in America* (New York: League for Industrial Democracy, 1970). A provocative essay on efficiency, with special emphasis upon the impact of Frederick W. Taylor and Frank Gilbreth and their school of scientific management.

Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933*, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960). A superb account of the American worker during the decade of the 1920's and the Hoover administration. It documents the powerful combination of business and government against organized labor.

Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964). This is the standard work on the craftsmen and artisans of Colonial America. It discusses the difference between the North and the South and the role of the skilled worker in Colonial Society. **ND**

David Brody, *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919.* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965). This is the definitive study of the famous post-war steel strike which contributed toward the anti-union sentiment of the 1920's. **ND/B/M/AUC**

Thomas R. Brooks, *Toil and Trouble: A History of American Labor*, 2nd ed. (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1971). Perhaps the best one volume history of the American labor movement in print. It presents a sympathetic treatment of organized labor, with several excellent chapters on recent developments. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

William Cahn, *A Pictorial History of American Labor. The Contributions of the Working Man and Woman to America's Growth, from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1972). The author presents a panorama of working men and women from colonial times to the present. He utilizes more than 750 engravings, newspaper clippings, broadsides, photographs and other illustrations, to supplement a narrative highlighting the development of labor. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, *The Age of Enterprise, A Social History of Industrial America* (New York: Macmillan, 1942). Although published in 1942 this remains one of the standard accounts of business developments in America. **ND**

John Commons, et al. *History of Labor in the United States*, 4 volumes (New York: Macmillan 1926-1935). This is still the standard multi-volume history of American labor. Commons pioneered the study of labor history with special emphasis upon the trade union. **M**

Melvin Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World.* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969). The author has produced the most comprehensive history of the IWW from its founding until 1922. It includes a detailed account of the Lawrence Textile strike, the Colorado labor wars and other major strikes. The repressive activities of the federal government against the Wobblies is accurately told. **B/AUC**

Sidney Fine, *Sit Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969). This is the most comprehensive history of the Flint Sit-Down Strike written from a wealth of first hand sources including the records of labor, government and interviewers with many of the participants. **C**

Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL, A History of the American Labor Movement 1935-1941*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). The most comprehensive history of the CIO with emphasis upon the unionized mass production industries. A balanced account of the leadership of John L. Lewis. **C/M**

Gerald N. Grob, *Workers and Utopia, A Study of Ideological Conflict in the American Labor Movement 1865-1900* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961). A definitive study of the various utopian plans of labor leaders in America in the late 19th Century. The author demonstrates the close association between such plans and the values of American society.

William Haber, ed., *Labor in a Changing America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1966). A series of provocative essays and studies of labor problems by leading American **ND/B/C/M**

historians, economists and labor union leaders. The split between the AFL and the CIO unions and the philosophical differences between them is covered in the studies.

Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962). The book describes the impact of poverty upon the industrial workers, migrants, minorities and the aged. First published in the early 1960's it provoked a number of federal anti-poverty programs.

Irving Howe, ed., *The World of the Blue-Collar Worker* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972). Through interviews with, and studies of, blue-collar factory workers, Howe and his colleagues attempt to dissect the worker, his values, his aspirations, problems and his views toward his labor unions. The book challenges many of the Marxists' interpretations of the worker.

Vernon H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict, Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968). The author has produced a definitive account of work in mines, attempts to organize mine workers and the role of the Western Federation of Miners. It describes the violence between mine unions and mine owners.

John H. M. H. Laslett, *Labor and the Left, A Study of Socialist and Radical Influences in the American Labor Movement, 1881-1924* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1970). The author uses case studies of various labor groups to determine the failure of labor unions to build a potent Socialist political movement in the United States.

Leon Litwack, *The American Labor Movement* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1962). A book of readings carefully selected to explain the conditions which led to the rise of labor unions, its leaders, tactics and the opposition to organized labor by business. The period from the mid-19th Century to the 1940's is covered. **B/M/AUC**

Joan London and **Henry Anderson,** *So Shall Ye Reap: The Story of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers' Movement.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970). An excellent account of agriculture in California, especially the harsh and authoritarian practices of the large farm owners. The plight of the Mexican American Worker and the role of Cesar Chavez in welding together a formidable labor organization is told in sympathetic, but objective terms.

James McBrearty, *American Labor History and Comparative Labor Movements: A Selected Bibliography* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1973). This bibliography is an indispensable tool for the study of labor history, labor unions, immigrants and minority groups, and comparative labor movements. **ND**

Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1965). The standard comprehensive study of labor during the Colonial period of American history. It contains a wealth of information on Colonial working conditions, wages and labor relations.

William L. O'Neill, ed., *Women at Work* (New York: Quadrangle Book Co., 1972). The editor presents two first hand accounts, one of sweatshop labor at the turn of the century and the other, an account of white collar employment in the 1960's.

James O'Toole, et al, *Work in America: Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1973). This task force study is one of the most provocative and up-to-date sources on the world of work in the United States and the sources of discontent of the workers. It covers the functions of work, "blue collar blues," work satisfaction and the need to redesign the work system. **ND/B/M**

Jerome M. Rosow, *The Worker and the Job: Coping with Change* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974). A series of provocative essays relating to the premise that "improving the place, the organization, and the nature of work can lead to better work performances and/or better quality of life in the Society."

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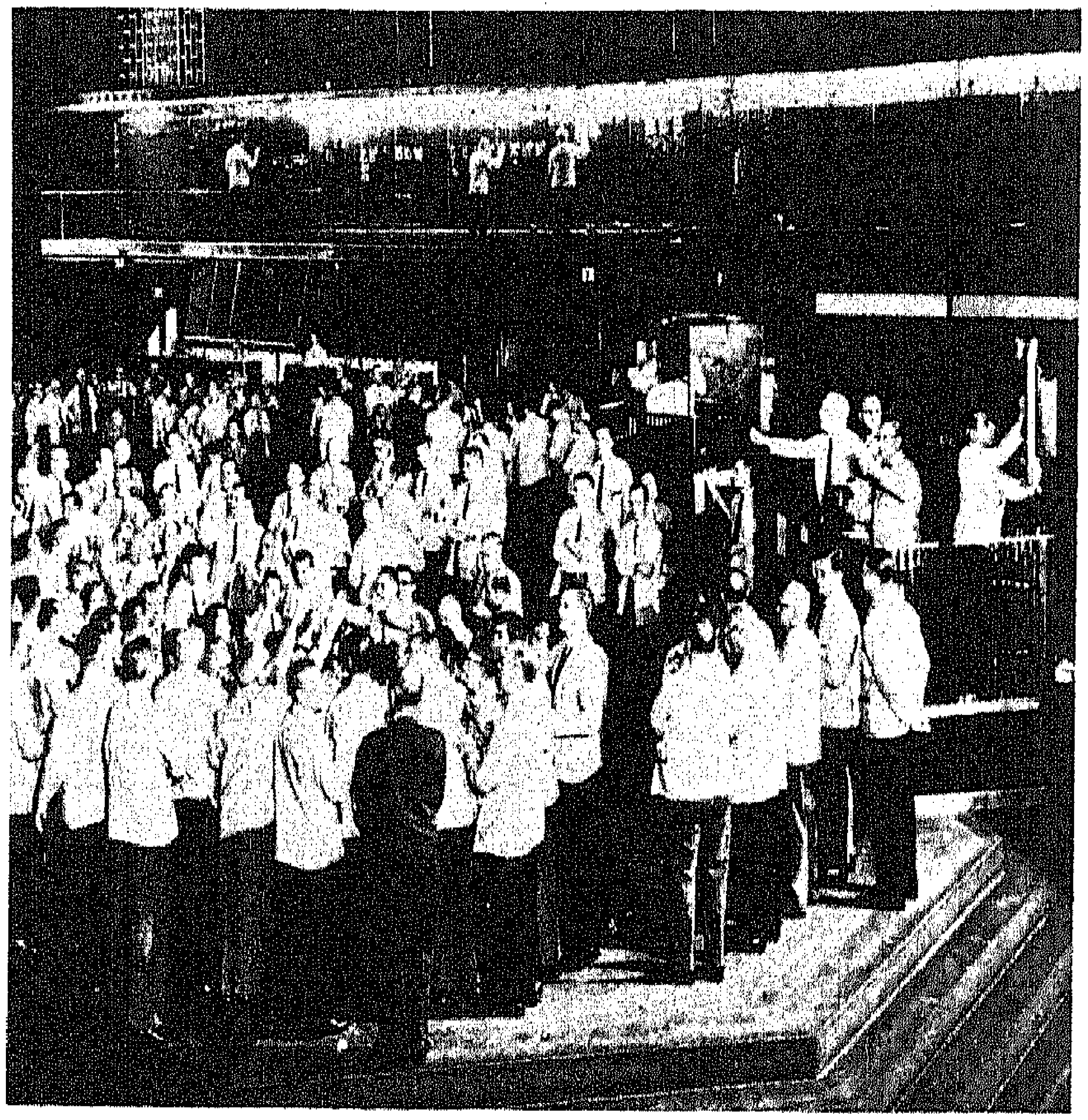
THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA

by ARTHUR M. JOHNSON

Is The Business of Americans Business?

Relying on private enterprise, Americans have made this country the leading example of a business civilization. The search for profit has dominated not only our economic development, it has also permeated our culture from religion to education, from cradle to grave. Reliance on business and the profit motive has made us not only the most affluent people in the world but, until recently, the most self-confident in terms of the rightness of our purpose and our ability to fulfill promises to ourselves and to others. In a land of plenty, individual efforts to make a better life have spurred growth for the whole society. Where there was a need or a want, the demand would be filled often to the point of inexcusable surplus. So powerful was this engine of private enterprise that new needs and wants were continuously generated to satisfy its seemingly insatiable lust for growth. "More" equals "better" became the hallmark of American civilization.

The fruits of this national dedication to materialistic measures of well being were, virtually by definition, unevenly distributed. The lot of the slave on the antebellum plantation or the immigrant factory or mill worker at the turn of this century provided a stark contrast to the way of life of those for whom they labored. Today the same contrasts exist between life in the big-city ghettos and the well-to-do suburbs. In a private enterprise system, rewards go not only to the swiftest and the best but also to the fortunate and, too often, to the least scrupulous. Thus the distribution of wealth and income does not necessarily favor those who



The commodity pit of the Chicago Board of Trade, where future contracts in farm crops are traded. This is part of the largest commodity futures exchange in the U.S.

contribute most to society. But the significant fact about the American business system has been that, for all its defects, its avenues have remained sufficiently open to talent and ambition to make the dream of achieving material success believable for generations of Americans.

As we enter the third century of our national existence, however, the validity and vitality of our traditional goals and assumptions are being severely tested. In the 1970's we have come face to face with the fact that resources we once thought inexhaustible are indeed very finite. The big car, even the big family, has drawn criticism as an unwarranted drain on resources belatedly recognized as dwindling at an alarming rate. American business has been called to account for its seeming disregard for the pollution of air and waters with industrial wastes. The businessman has lost his honored place among the nation's elite because many of the problems we face and goals we have set are not susceptible to business solutions. Americans in the 1970's are concerned about the power of large corporations over their lives, about price levels and rigidities associated with concentrated economic power, and about the lack of job opportunities being created in the private sector. Businessmen, on the other hand, are alarmed at the rate of growth of government's role in the economy and the accompanying restrictions on their freedom of decision-making.

The nation is clearly in a state of transition that challenges assumptions about the organization and goals of economic activity. The process of change itself and the outcome are tinged with a high degree of uncertainty not only for individuals but for the business practices and institutions that have so strongly shaped American life over the past two centuries. It may well be that we are entering one of those periods of great discontinuities of change comparable in the history of Western Civilization to those of the Renaissance and Reformation. Many Americans are questioning whether the business of Americans is business as we have known it. It is particularly fitting therefore in the year of our national bicentennial to look to the past to understand what we have become and even more important to ponder the significance of this experience in terms of our future.

Private Enterprise in the Marketplace

Seventeen seventy-six was a year of decision for British colonists in America who sought to break the ties that bound them to Britain. In that same year a Scottish moral philosopher, Adam Smith, provided a rationale for challenging the mercantilist economic principles that had defined so many of the relationships between mother country and colonies. The conjunction of these two developments, fortuitously occurring in that historic year, helped to establish the foundations for a new nation whose future growth was based on private enterprise in the marketplace. Adam Smith's work launched a revolution in economic thought that complemented the political revolution launched by Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty. As a result the United States has been the world's showplace for the strengths and weaknesses of private enterprise for two hundred years.

The British colonies were founded on the premise that they would provide raw materials for the mother country and a market for her products. Private enterprise was enticed to bear the chief risks, with private companies operating under royal charters being given specified trade monopolies. The flag of England was planted around the world, as well as in America, by private enterprisers seeking a profit in alliance with the Crown. Thomas Mun, England's most famous Mercantilist writer, defended this system as providing England with "Treasure by Forraign

Trade." "We must," he wrote in the 1620's, "ever observe this rule: to sell more to strangers yearly than we consume of theirs in value . . . that part of our stock which is not returned to us in wares must necessarily be brought home in treasure." The implementation of this policy over the next century and a half placed increasing constraints on freedom of enterprise in the American colonies, culminating in the events of 1776.

Attacking monopoly, which he equated with mercantilism, Adam Smith found support among the rising English merchant class as well as among aspiring colonial capitalists. His thesis that individual initiative should be freed of governmental intervention fitted the needs of aspiring businessmen in both Britain and America. In Britain it contributed to the demand for economic and political reform; in America it supported the movement for separation from the mother country.

Smith assumed "the uniform, constant and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition." By reconciling the self-interest of individuals with the welfare of society he provided appealing foundations for the operation of the private enterprise system. The resulting theory is as ingenious as it is simple. Businessmen will concentrate on markets where the most profit is to be made. The customer is free to seek the best product for the going price. As the number of individuals of firms competing in a market increases, price and profit levels decline and the less efficient are forced out. In the end, only those operating at peak efficiency will be left, each earning just enough to make it worthwhile to stay in that market. Thus, market forces, which Adam Smith termed "the invisible hand," control the efficient allocation of resources for society while each participant in the market is seeking his own self-interest.

Conditions in America approximated the assumptions of this theory sufficiently to make reliance on private enterprise viable and acceptable. The very geography of North America conspired to intertwine the destiny of the new nation with private enterprise. The fact that a broad continent, unpopulated and rich in natural resources, stretched westward from the British colonies on the shores of the Atlantic insured a continuing influx of settlers with the skills and the ambition to better themselves by making the most of these resources.

The legal, political, and institutional heritage that the colonists transplanted from the other side of the Atlantic provided solid underpinnings for private enterprise. The Protestant ethic of hard work, frugality, and thrift, fitted the needs of a developing country. The English emphasis on the protection of private property and due process of law guaranteed that the substance as well as spirit of private enterprise would be protected in America.

A governmental structure dedicated to the sanctity of private property rights was needed to provide this protection after the American Revolution. Economic rivalry between the states under the Articles of Confederation limited free access to markets. Dissatisfaction with this situation and the threat to property rights from Shays's Rebellion in Western Massachusetts contributed to the demand for a Constitutional Convention in 1787. In his epochal 1913 book, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, Charles A. Beard was the first American historian to single out the relationship between the political and the economic in the framing of the United States Constitution. Though his thesis has since been severely criticized and found wanting in important respects, there is no question that the Constitution was conceived by many of its framers as a means of supporting property rights, whereas the 1776 Declaration of Independence had strongly asserted personal rights and an egalitarian philosophy.

Under a system of private enterprise, protected by the Constitution, accumulation of capital conferred political power. Accordingly, the relationship of personal rights to those of property became one of the strongest themes and recurring issues of American history.

The concept of government as policeman-guarantor of property rights led to the widespread belief that the early nineteenth century was one of laissez faire policies toward business and therefore property owners. But this is only further testimony to the grip that the concept of free, private enterprise has held on Americans and their perception of the past. It does not acknowledge that governmental policies to promote, protect and assist private enterprise constitute active intervention in the economy and have characterized government-business relations since the start of our existence as a nation.

Beginning in 1785, generous public policies speeded settlement of the national domain by authorizing its transfer from public to private hands at little or no cost. Communities, states, and the federal government later lent their credit to private entrepreneurs seeking to provide the transportation links between regional and national markets. State laws to expedite incorporation and limit investors' risks further facilitated private enterprise. Encouraged and aided by government to maximize their self-interest, individuals sought new and imaginative ways of improving their lot. In the process, this country grew and prospered but not without costs to the social fabric.

The United States Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Marshall was an ally of property and also of competition. It struck down barriers to interstate commerce such as those New York tried to impose on waterborne traffic in New York waters *(Gibbons v. Ogden*, 1824). By asserting the superiority of federal to state authority *(McCulloch v.*

Maryland, 1819), the Marshall Court strengthened the concept of broad federal power to aid the economy. Under Marshall's successor, Roger Taney, the Court in the landmark *Charles River Bridge* case (1837) invalidated a state-conferred monopoly as contrary to public policy.

Encouraged by government at every level, the frontier of settlement moved westward, with private enterprise the prime mover. The storekeeper or tavern owner who moved into frontier communities was in effect linking them with larger markets and distant sources of provisions, supplies, or refreshment. As communities became larger and more closely integrated into the market system, private enterprise provided more goods and services. As markets expanded in size, whole regions became more specialized in production; some communities grew into entrepôts for the assembly and shipment of raw materials or finished goods to be exchanged for the specialized products of other regions—be it cotton, wheat, or manufactured goods.

In free competition there are inevitably winners and losers. While theory holds that businessmen strive to maximize profits, reality suggests that they also try to minimize risks. In the colonial period, for example, foreign trade was the chief source of significant profits, but it was also a very risky business. The hazards of shipwreck, piracy, and war were accompanied by slow communication and therefore difficulties of controlling property afloat and gauging foreign markets. To minimize these risks, wide latitude of business as well as navigation judgment was left to ship captains. Merchant capitalists often reduced the risks of shipowning by holding only fractional shares, and they also engaged in a variety of other activities, ranging from retailing and wholesaling to insurance and banking. Despite the risks, substantial fortunes were amassed from maritime trade well into the early nineteenth century.

Maritime wealth immobilized by the War of 1812 contributed to the industrial revolution in America. With the basic technology clandestinely imported from Britain, adapted by Yankee ingenuity, and financed by merchants, production of textiles under a single roof was launched on the banks of the Charles River in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1813. It soon supplanted the more primitive "putting out" system introduced earlier. Competition with British textiles was vigorous but quickly successful in the lesser quality fabrics.

Meanwhile, manufacturing spread westward responding to the expanding national market. Private enterprise sought new methods of production and cost reduction. The answer lay in standardization and interchangeable parts. Some experimentation and commercial production, as in the case of gun manufacture, antedated the textile revolution. By the 1850's mass production of watches, clocks, and shoes was well established. The Patent Office reported issuance of over 2,500 patents annually in that decade. The sewing machine, patented by Elias Howe in 1846, revolutionized the shoe and garment industries. Similarly, mass-produced mechanical harvesting machinery was revolutionizing agriculture by mid-nineteenth century.

Linking the emerging eastern industrial establishment with the specialized commercial agriculture of the West and the Cotton Kingdom of the South was a matter for private enterprise, either in conjunction with or as successor to governmental initiatives. In the 1820's and 1830's, the emphasis was on canals, many constructed in emulation of the Erie Canal, which confirmed the ascendancy of New York Port in its competition with Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston. But the canal era was short-lived as steam power not only began to turn factory machinery but also locomotive wheels.

A railroad network, at first linking major Atlantic Coast commercial centers with one another and with mill sites quickly expanded westward. Efforts by the Lakes states to construct and operate railroads as a public enterprise collapsed in the wake of the Panic of 1837. Private investors, including some who had only recently left foreign trade, acquired these partially completed roads, often for only a few cents on the dollar. By the beginning of the Civil War, competitive railroad building westward made Chicago the nation's transportation center and linked it with the East by multiple routes. Meanwhile, tracks had reached as far West as the Missouri River.

In the 1850's wheat was moving to the seaboard from mid-America by rail as well as by waterways. Plantation owners in the South had extended cotton cultivation steadily southwestward and provided the nation with its major export crop. But the capital, initiative, and business acumen of Northerners had delivered control of the export cotton trade to Yankee ships and New York merchants.

The need for capital to power the expanding economy called forth new money instruments and gave capital centers a new importance. Railroads often required investments in the tens of thousands of dollars per mile. To raise the large amounts of capital they needed, a brisk market in railroad securities developed in the 1840's. Risks were often high and speculation was rampant. Gullible and greedy investors were often the victims of speculative schemes for quick wealth. But a legitimate and specialized securities market emerged in this era to provide capital for private enterprise on a new scale. The New York Stock Exchange, organized in 1817, listed far more transportation companies in the 1850's than manufacturing concerns.

The application of competitive, private enterprise to capital-intensive and inherently monopolistic railroads led to fierce and often destructive price competition. Although the economic characteristics of railroads bore little resemblance to the conditions associated with classic price competition theory, the proposed remedy for the resulting abuses as late as the 1870's was congressional recommendations for introducing yet more railroad competition. Clearly, belief in competition in the marketplace had become so ingrained in Americans that its benefits were asserted even where it was clearly inappropriate.

By mid-century, competition in expanding markets with few, if any, governmental regulations had produced rapid economic growth but also inequalities of economic and political power. The conflict between men of property and those without it antedated the Revolution and became a fixture of American politics and political parties. The national debate was inaugurated in the Constitutional Convention. In the 1790's it was typified by the differences between Alexander Hamilton, a friend of the rich and powerful and advocate of federal aid to private enterprise, and Thomas Jefferson, who spoke for the common man and the virtues of an agrarian society. Later, the Whig party's spokesman, Henry Clay, called in the Hamiltonian tradition for an "American System," which would protect business, promote a centralized banking system, and use government aid to speed transportation linkages between East and West. Andrew Jackson, who defeated Clay in the presidential election of 1832, proclaimed the rights of the common man, opposed federal aid to internal improvements, and successfully fought the Second United States Bank, a successor to the institution urged by Hamilton to guard the public credit in cooperation with private investors. While the political franchise was broadened under Jackson and attacks were made on government aid to private enterprise, the pressures for rapid development of the national domain, the alluring opportunities for enterprising individuals to achieve material advances, and the strength of the private enterprise creed held in check those who would have substantially fettered it.

There is no question that despite its imperfections the private enterprise system worked to increase the overall welfare of a rapidly growing country. But the system did not produce smooth growth. Decentralization of economic decision-making meant that exaggerated expectations led to excessive land speculation, to overbuilding of railroads, to an emphasis on the speed of development rather than its quality. Americans were a people in a hurry—to get rich, to conquer new land, to demonstrate to the rest of the world their superiority as a free people and the superiority of their political and economic systems. Inevitably they overdid it. As a result, the economy suffered from periodic panics, recessions and depressions as speculation and investment outstripped effective demand. Natural resources were despoiled casually since America was accepted as a land of plenty. Thus the result of reliance on private enterprise as the mainspring of economic development produced bursts of rapid growth followed by periods of consolidation and retrenchment.

Population grew from less than 4,000,000 in 1790 to over 31,000,000 in 1860. Estimated national wealth more than quintupled. But at the outbreak of the Civil War, despite its impressive progress, the United States was still an "undeveloped" country relying heavily on the importation of investment capital, workers, ideas, and many manufactured goods. With Appomattox and the victory of the North the advocates of growth through unbridled private enterprise were given a clear field. In the following decades they made the most of their opportunity, in the process illustrating both the strengths and weaknesses of reliance on self-interest to serve society.

Empire Building: Cornering the Market

Henry Demarest Lloyd, a leading critic of emerging American big business in the last decades of the nineteenth century, observed that the natural outcome of unrestrained competition was monopoly. Since the force behind private enterprise was self-interest, businessmen did their best to overcome or exploit competitive market forces or conditions. As markets became larger and imposed increasing capital requirements, as business organization became more complex, and as production involved more technology, barriers to entry were created that automatically limited the number of competitors in some markets. Ruthless, unregulated competition combined with these developments negated many of the major classical restraints on individual power over price and markets. As a result, private enterprise in the last half of the nineteenth century not only transformed the American economy but also its competitive structure.

Some of the most famous names in American business history—among them John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan—belong to the generation born in the 1830's. Bright, ambitious, efficient, and often ruthless, they led the post-Civil War drive to corner and control the key markets of an industrializing America. Their concepts of competition were derived from the pre-Civil War era of predominantly small business, where free competition was often of the tooth-and-claw variety. In their drive to succeed, they outcompeted—some said "outcheated"—their fellows. To some they were "captains of industry" who exemplified the validity and vitality of private enterprise. To others like Lloyd, and especially to those who succumbed or were forced to terms with new, concentrated private economic power, these entrepreneurs had subverted the enterprise system for their own benefit while rationalizing the results in the newly popular idiom of Darwin's survival of the fittest. "Robber barons" was the term applied to them by Matthew Josephson in a book with that title published during the Great Depression. Whether robber barons or captains of industry, a handful of these men transformed the American economy in a relatively short span of years.

The archetype of the unrelenting competitor was Cornelius Vanderbilt who, though of an older generation, was just as aggressive as the new industrial leaders. He relied on himself rather than the institutions of society to protect his interests. When a company that was indebted to him failed to pay its obligation, he dispatched this curt note:

> *Gentlemen: You have undertaken to cheat me. I won't sue you, for law is too slow. I will ruin you.*
>
> *Yours truly,*
> *Cornelius Van Derbilt*

Unlike the typical entrepreneur of the early 19th century, Vanderbilt had made himself a specialist and more specifically a specialist in transportation. Starting as a ferry boat operator between Staten Island and New York City, he proved himself a competitor of ability who showed no quarter. Before the Civil War he designed and operated both coastwise and ocean steamers that his competitors could not match. His strategy was to drive rates down relentlessly until his opponent agreed to pay him not to compete.

In the early 1860's Vanderbilt, who disliked railroads because he had been injured in a railroad accident, saw that this new means of transportation showed an investment potential that could not be ignored. He switched his complete interest to them and quickly became involved in fierce competitive struggles over lines entering New York City. Using his Hudson River road to put pressure on the owners of the New York Central, he gained control of that route between the seaboard and Chicago. Vanderbilt upgraded equipment, service and operating efficiency, and ran the Central with an iron hand. Although it was suggestive of the man that he should propose a memorial in New York's Central Park to the two greatest Americans—George Washington and Cornelius Vanderbilt—he proved that an unrelenting competitor could serve the economy even as he undermined competition.

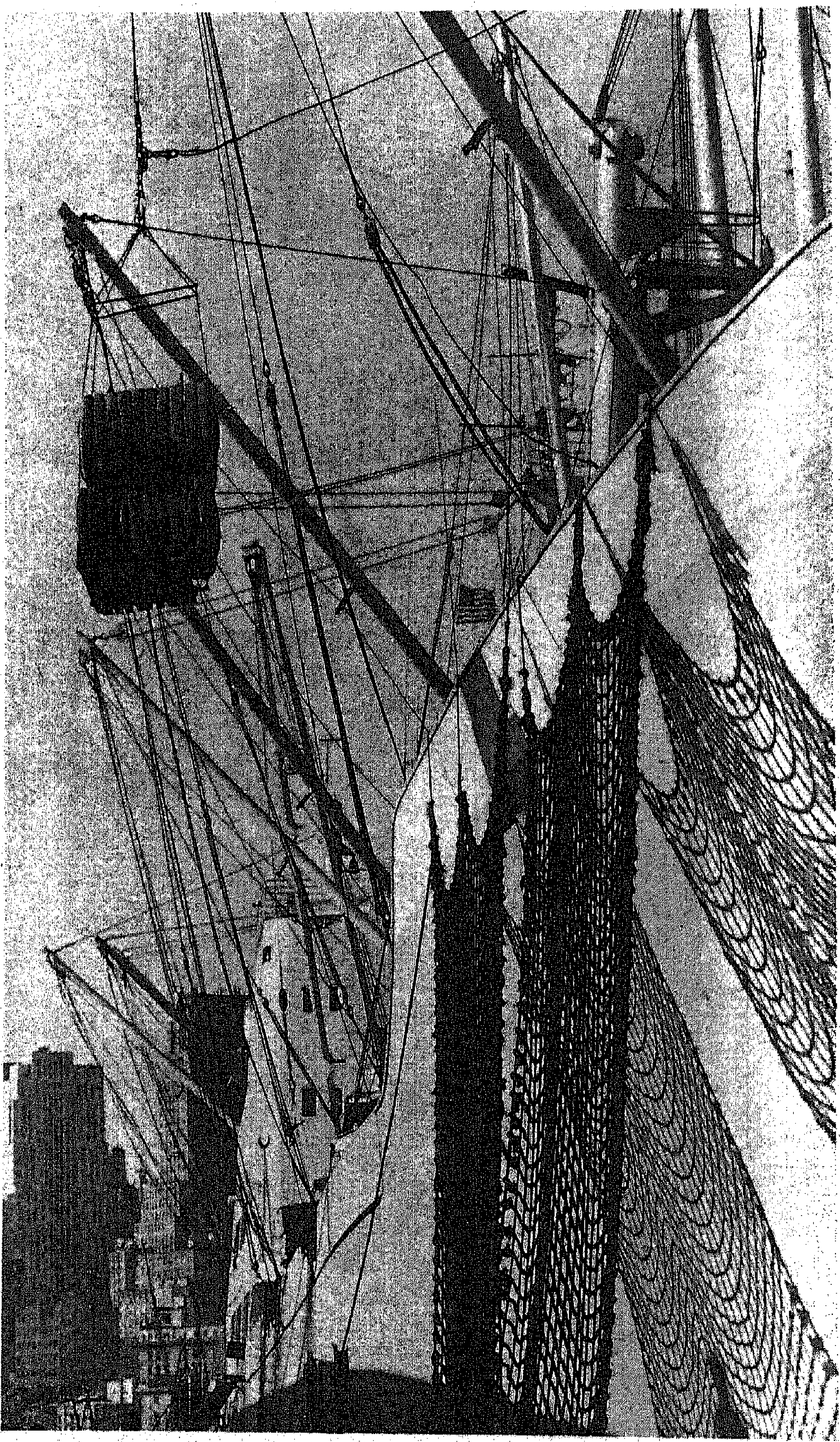
In an era of unabashed free enterprise, speculation was rampant. As early as 1796 an English visitor characterized the United States as a "land of speculations." Speculation in railroads followed and accompanied speculation in land. For Daniel Drew, one of Vanderbilt's major antagonists, speculation in and manipulation of railroad stocks was a way of life. He achieved especially widespread notoriety for his raids on Erie stock. As a Wall Street wag put it, "Daniel says 'up'—Erie goes up. Daniel says 'down'—Erie goes down. Daniel says 'wiggle waggle'—it bobs both ways!"

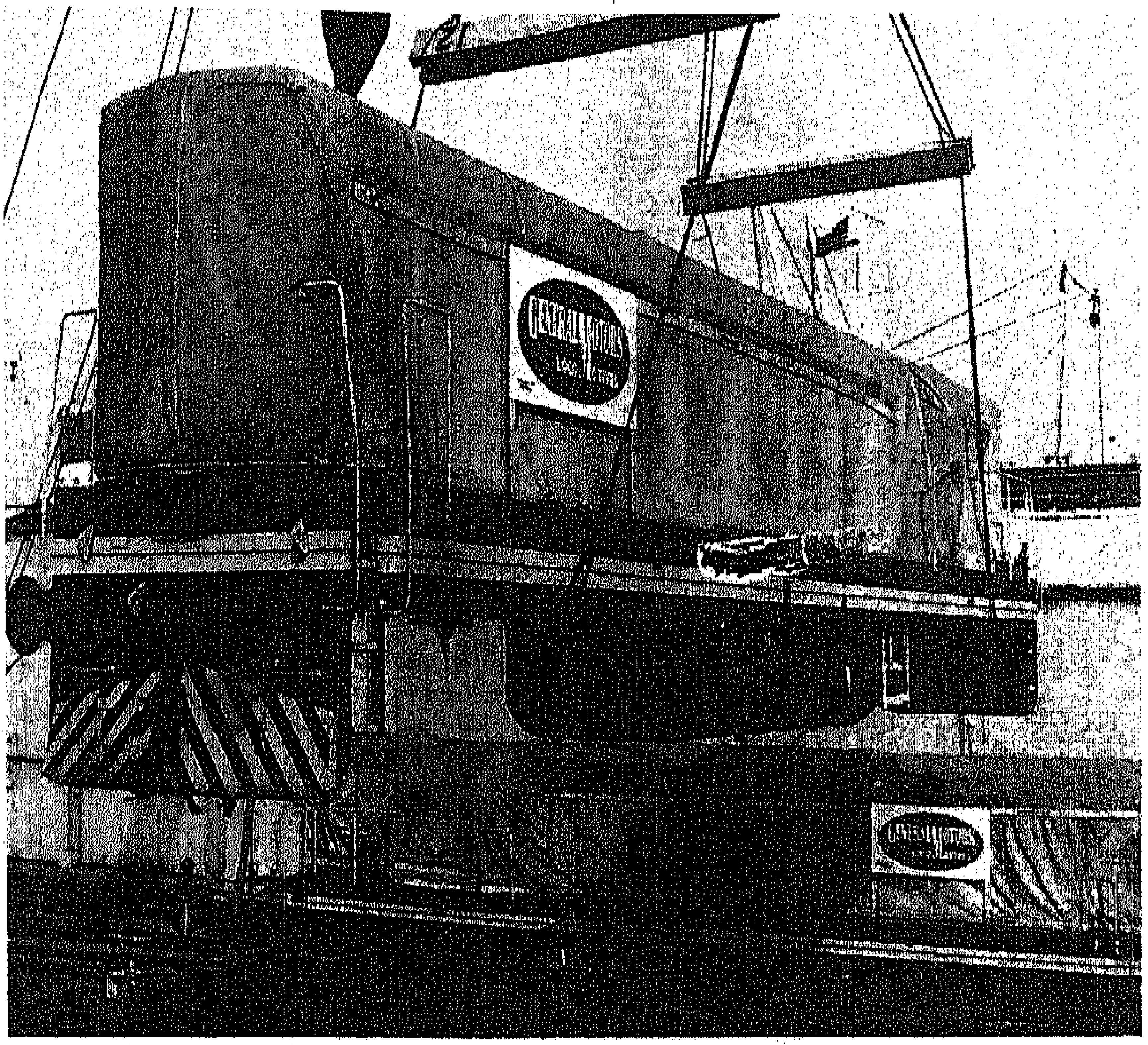
The Erie, the "Scarlet Lady of Wall Street," drew speculators like ants to a Sunday picnic. Drew and his allies, Jim Fisk and Jay Gould, repelled Vanderbilt's attempted takeover of the Erie with great profit to themselves. Fisk and Gould went on to try to corner the gold market in 1869. They almost succeeded in involving President Grant, but their corner failed when, recognizing the scheme for what it was, Grant authorized the sale of $4 million of the government's metal in the Gold Room of the New York Stock Exchange. Gould then turned to creating a western railroad empire, using many of the same bareknuckled competitive techniques as Vanderbilt but also, like him, integrating and improving railroad service.

The burgeoning railroads offered opportunities for a new kind of financial entrepreneurship—investment banking. One leader in the movement, Jay Cooke & Co., had established itself during the Civil War as a marketer of government securities to the general public and after 1865 became increasingly involved with railroad promotion. Cooke's failure to keep close check on the management of the Northern Pacific, which his firm was financing amidst a period of major overexpansion in railroad mileage, contributed to his collapse in 1873, triggering a panic and depression of major proportions. Meanwhile, another investment banking firm, J. P. Morgan & Co., was emerging to take Cooke's place and affect significant areas of the economy through its financial power.

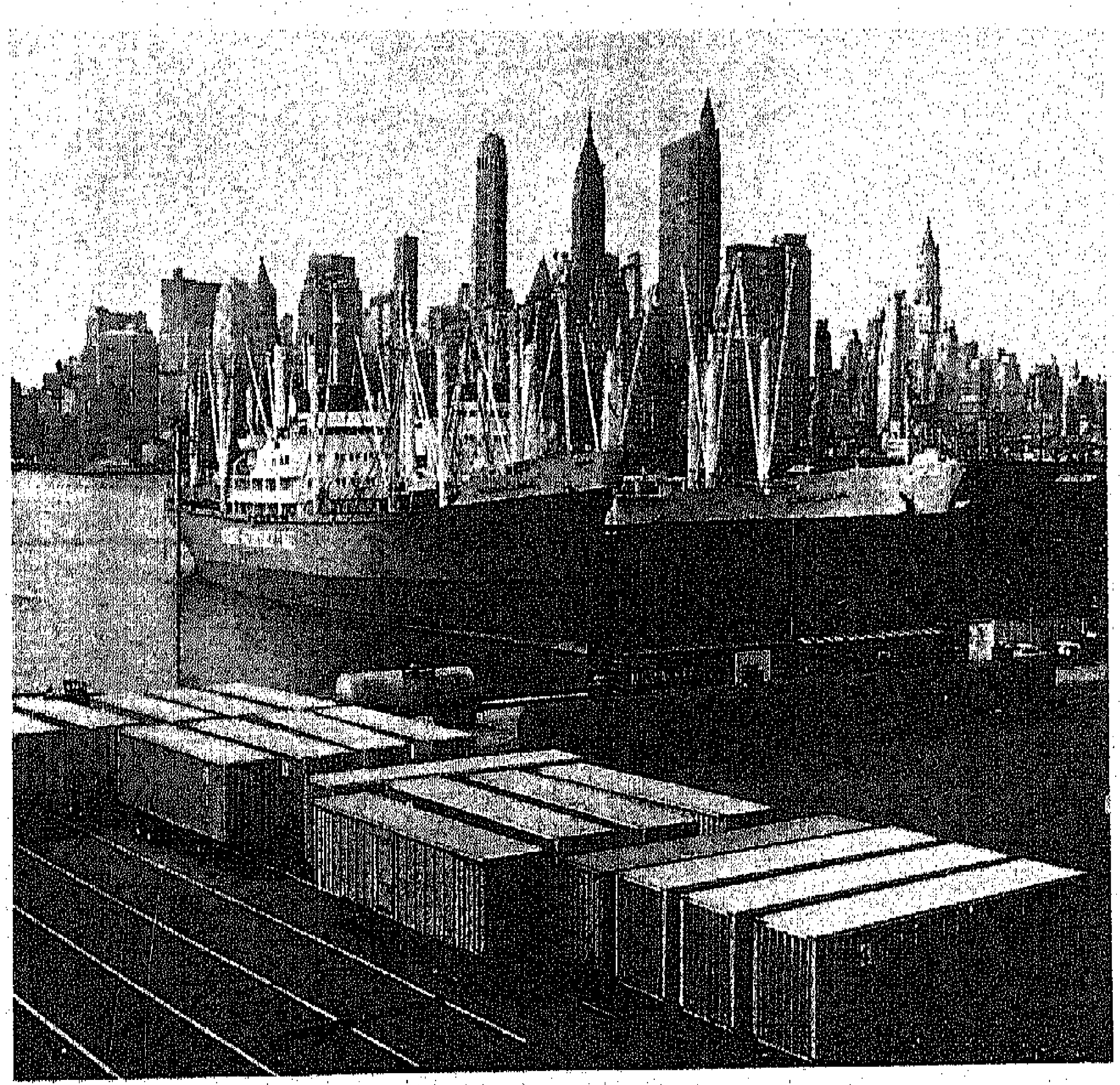
Morgan had a family background in merchant banking and, unlike his industrial counterparts, was educated abroad. While, like Cooke, dealing in government securities, his firm became increasingly interested in railroad financing. When post-Civil War overexpansion and ruinous competition brought numbers of American roads to the point of bankruptcy, Morgan and his partners stepped in, reorganized capital structures and in some instances "rationalized" competition. Unlike Cooke, Morgan insisted that his firm be represented on the boards of directors of companies that he reorganized. This practice developed a network of influence, if not control, that gave the Morgan firm a major voice in the railroad industry.

The need for iron and then steel to meet the expanding railroads' needs placed another entrepreneur on the road to dominating the market for





ABOVE—General Motors locomotives being loaded on to a Yugoslav ship for export to that country. LEFT—Cargo intended for export being loaded aboard ship at the port of New York. BELOW—Containered cargo storage on the Marine Terminal pier in New York before shipment abroad.—Port of New York authority pix.



these indispensable sinews of an industrial America. Andrew Carnegie, a Scotch immigrant, started his career as a bobbin boy in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1848. A year later young Carnegie became a messenger boy in a Pittsburgh telegraph office. It was not long before he became an assistant to the western division superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad, whom he succeeded in a few more years. But the iron business, where he had invested on the side, increasingly attracted his interest and he resigned from the railroad in 1865 to give iron his full attention.

Carnegie was an outstanding salesman and he turned that ability to good use in obtaining contracts for railroad bridges. His close connections with the Pennsylvania Railroad gave him favored access to its postwar needs for iron and later steel. By the mid-1870's he was emerging as the premier iron and steel maker in the country. Like Vanderbilt, Carnegie was a specialist; his attention was intensively focused on iron and steel. In an economy with a growing demand for these materials, Carnegie's strategy fitted the times. It was a matter of "putting all your eggs in one basket and then watching the basket." He innovated only after others had shown the way; he invested in the future when others feared to do so. Carnegie left to others the recruitment and treatment of immigrant mill workers. He never really understood their strike at Homestead, Pennsylvania, in 1892 which left 10 dead and many injured.

By the turn of the century, the United States was producing almost as much steel as England and Germany combined, and Andrew Carnegie had played a major role in this ascendancy. Yet more than 30 years before, in 1868, at the age of 33 he had noted that he already had an income of $50,000 a year and should quit business and devote his surplus "to benevolent purposes."

John Pierpont Morgan had encountered Carnegie early in his railroad career and had marked him as destined for success, and it was Morgan who arranged the sale of Carnegie's properties in 1901. Morgan himself had turned from railroads to industrial combinations. His firm, for example, had played a leading role in the formation of General Electric, which dominated the new electrical industry via patents. Now, with Carnegie anxious to devote himself to philanthropy instead of business, Morgan saw the opportunity to end the prospect of renewed price competition in iron and steel by merging the Carnegie interests with other steel firms. The result was formation of the United States Steel Corporation, the first billion-dollar American corporation. This giant for its time used its power paternally to maintain stable prices in direct contravention of classical market competition.

Though railroads spurred new basic industries like iron and steel and provided the major stimulus for active marketing of securities, their primary functional contribution was creation of a genuine national market. Access to this market was both a challenge and an opportunity for private entrepreneurs and their response further undermined local, small-scale production for protected markets.

Gustavus Swift was one of the first to perceive the railroad's potential for national marketing of dressed beef. In 1872 he moved to Chicago, which was well located with respect to both the supply of animals and markets. He used the newly developed refrigerated railroad car to distribute his products throughout the country, where they were sold through "branch houses" to local retail outlets. The same strategy was employed by Philip Armour, who specialized in pork products, allegedly using all parts of the pig but the squeal. The economies of this system helped to drive most local butchers and slaughter houses out of business, while the meat packers' ownership of refrigerator cars cemented their relationships with the railroads. Some competitors did arise, but by the turn of this century the national market in packaged meats was controlled by a handful of firms.

Another vision of utilizing the railroads for access to the national market spurred competition of a new kind at the retail level. Richard Sears began selling watches by mail order in 1886 while working for a railroad in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. This profitable venture soon suggested the potential of mail-order selling by catalogue. The Sears, Roebuck catalogue gave the rural housewife direct access to an astounding variety of goods which were available at a low cost plus mail charges. In this way a national retail market was created in direct competition with local merchants, undermining any monopolistic advantages they might have enjoyed based on location.

Railroads also figured prominently in a very successful effort to bring order—and near-monopoly—to the new, highly competitive oil industry. Petroleum had been discovered in western Pennsylvania in 1859 and during the war years had proved profitable, though it was a feast-or-famine business. In many respects the early oil industry was a model of classical competition. Production was largely limited to the western Pennsylvania area; the raw product itself was substantially the same grade of petroleum; information about the market was easily available, and entry into petroleum production and refining was not subject to heavy capital outlays. Under these conditions it was inevitable that there would be many producers selling to many customers, with price largely determined by the conditions of supply and demand. Millionaires were made and unmade virtually overnight.

The fact that petroleum could be drained from a drilling site to adjacent ones meant that an oil strike immediately led to frenzied drilling activity to insure each producer his share of the black gold. The result was often a glut of crude oil, which could only be moved at ruinously low prices. At times the market was so poor that petroleum was simply allowed to run out on the ground. On the other hand, since oil prospecting was not a scientific business, prices would rise as the existing crude-oil supply was diminished and new sources were not found to replace the exhausted ones.

A young Cleveland commission merchant, John D. Rockefeller, correctly saw that the highest risks in the oil business were in its production end. Most refined petroleum was sold as kerosene in markets at a distance from the oil fields. Rockefeller reasoned that bringing order to a chaotic industry and profit to himself and his associates required controlling refinery capacity on the one hand and the price of crude oil in the fields on the other. The means of doing so lay in controlling the terms of oil transportation between well head and refinery.

Rockefeller had gained control of Cleveland refining by 1872 and gathered around him an able group of associates. They quickly won favorable rates from the railroads by guaranteeing full trainloads of oil on a regular schedule. Other producers and refiners soon found that they could not obtain comparable rates, because they could not supply the railroads with comparable volume shipments. While the Rockefeller firm paid the same rate as its competitors, it received part of its payment back in the form of rebates. Rockefeller's net cost was therefore less than his competitors', and in some instances his Standard Oil Company also allegedly received a rebate on its competitors' shipments, further adding to their competitive disadvantage. Understandably it was outdistanced and outraged competitors who attacked Standard Oil the most vigorously.

As Standard Oil systematically bought up refineries by carrot-and-stick tactics, its power expanded rapidly. In the oil fields it controlled the pipelines that collected the crude oil from the wells; oil-carrying railroads were played off against one another to keep them cooperative; Standard Oil trunk pipelines paralleled key rail routes to keep the railroads in line; and major Standard refineries were located on waterways which provided an obvious and appreciated threat to railroads distributing refined products.

Since in many producing areas Standard offered the only market in the field, it could raise the wellhead price to encourage speculative drilling by independent producers and then lower it when and if they were successful. Thus many of the risks of a competitive, volatile, and uncertain industry were shifted to producers while Standard Oil, which controlled in the vicinity of 80–90 percent of refining and pipeline capacity by 1890, reaped near-monopoly profits. However, its hold was far from absolute and when new sources of crude were discovered in the Southwest shortly after the turn of this century, Standard faced substantial new competition.

But Standard Oil's success was also the product of a meticulously efficient operation, utilizing every economy of scale and giving attention to every detail that would increase its profit. Despite the overtones of monopoly, American consumers could buy a better quality of kerosene and at a lower unit cost in 1890 than had been possible twenty years earlier. On the other hand, the ruthless competitive tactics employed by Standard Oil at every level of the business gave point to Henry Demarest Lloyd's indictment of free competition as leading inexorably to monopoly, which Americans had detested since the days of mercantilism.

Unrestricted competition in an era of rising demand in a national market created unstable competitive conditions in a number of post-Civil War industries. As in railroads, steel, and oil, excess capacity was produced by exaggerated expectations of market potential and excessive numbers of industry entrants. Those who survived the resulting heavy downward pressure on prices recognized the need to exert a private discipline that required new forms of business organization and control.

Standard Oil was the leader in this movement, first combining refinery capacity and then integrating its operations back to the oil fields and forward to petroleum marketing. To manage and coordinate these varied activities, Standard in 1882 pioneered the trust form of organization. In effect this device conferred control of far flung activities on a small group of trustees, who made the strategic decisions for the whole organization. Since Standard Oil was so successful in thwarting and turning market forces to its advantage, the term "trust" came to be associated with the dominant firm in an industry. By 1890, trusts had been formed in the whiskey, sugar, cordage, and other industries. Resentment against these efforts to eliminate competition by the purchase or elimination of competitors led to the enactment of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, which declared every combination in the form of trust or otherwise to be illegal.

As the result of an 1895 Supreme Court decision that manufacturing was not interstate commerce and was therefore exempt from the Sherman Act, the Sugar Trust, which controlled some 98 percent of the nation's sugar refining capacity, was allowed to add yet more capacity. On the other hand, unions were found vulnerable to the Act, as were voluntary industry associations that set prices or allocated markets to avoid the impact of ruinous price competition. These court decisions encouraged businessmen and promoters to form new corporate combinations that could control overcapacity and price more effectively than the vulnerable loose combinations of the association type. The pressing need to reduce excess productive capacity plus the opportunities for realizing securities profits in merger negotiations added to the incentives to combine competitors. At the turn of this century there was a frenzy of this activity, which produced such familiar and suggestive names as United States Steel, International Harvester, and National Biscuit, among others. Most were organized as holding companies, the equivalent of the earlier trust form. In many instances J. P. Morgan & Co. was promoter and midwife, adding further to that firm's network of interlocking directorates and resulting influence.

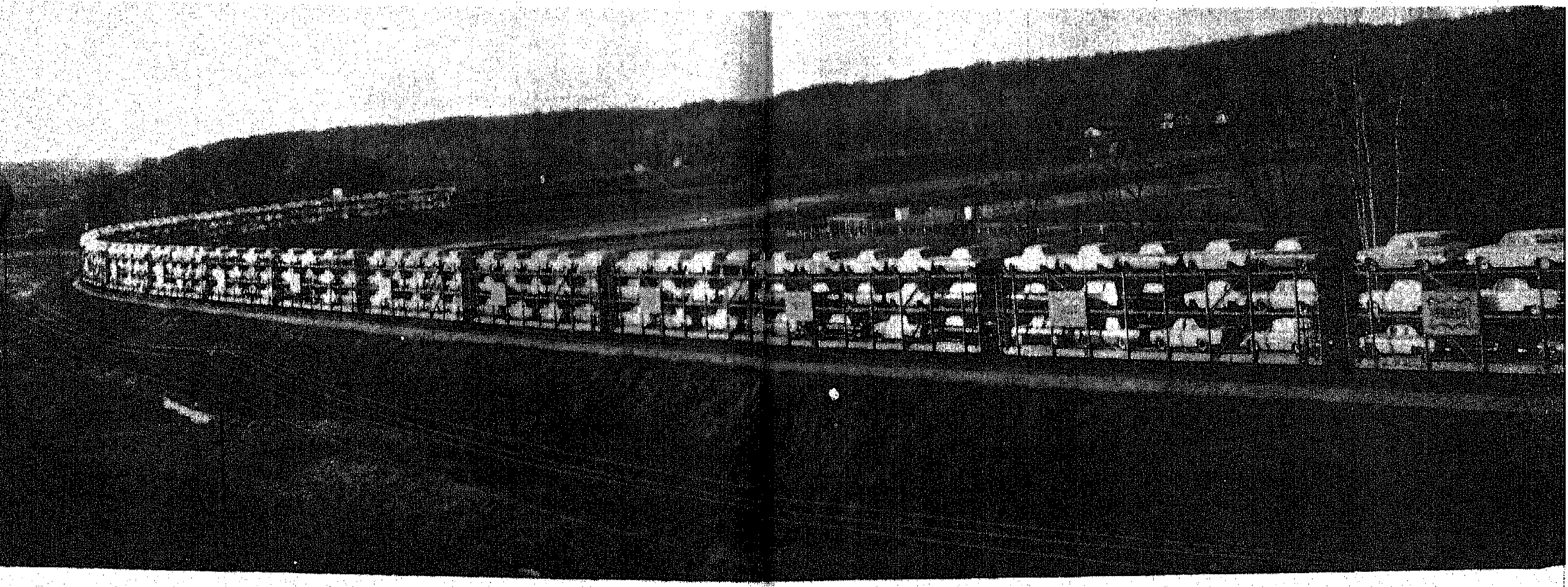
By the turn of this century, then, the American free enterprise system had been substantially modified. While vigorous competition remained in many local and regional markets and in consumer products, capital goods and natural resource industries were increasingly typified by a few large companies producing for the national and international markets. The exerted substantial control over their raw materials and markets, adjusting output rather than price to changing conditions. Individual direction of the type employed by Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and by Rockefeller in his early days, had been replaced by professional management with limited ownership interest, increasingly specialized in their managerial talents and backed up by teams of specialists.

The challenge of production to meet a growing nation's needs had been more than met. However, great inequalities of wealth and power had also been created, and the public's faith in the automatic benefits of free enterprise and competition had been strained. The escape of basic elements of the economy from the disciplines of the competitive market had created a major national issue by 1900.

Subsidizing and Regulating:

Controlling the Economy

While the traditional rhetoric of private enterprise stressed non-intervention by government, it did not exclude governmental assistance to business. One of the primary roles of government from the beginning of the Republic was conceived to be that of aiding private enterprise. By the



Triple decker car rack, one type of railroad wagon tailored to the needs of a specific customer. These enable the railroads to haul to market 54 percent of the 10 million automobiles produced annually in the United States.

late nineteenth century, however, the abuses of private economic power in a largely unregulated economy led to a growing public demand that government restrain anti-competitive business tactics and practices. Some groups, like the Populists, even advocated government ownership of basic public utilities. Although attacks on the private enterprise system produced some governmental constraints on the freedom of business decision-making, enforcement was relatively weak and for a time, following World War I, virtually negligible. The Great Depression of the 1930's brought sterner and more pervasive governmental intervention in the economy. This development, plus the requirements of mobilizing economic resources for World War II and then managing the complex postwar economy, gradually expanded the role of government to affect business decisions both directly and indirectly in a multitude of areas, including environmental protection, labor relations, plant safety standards, consumer products quality and safety, and in some cases even price. But none of these changes ended government assistance to business. Indeed, some "private enterprise" survived only through this aid.

Subsidizing business has strong roots in the 18th century mercantile system, which Adam Smith attacked. The British system was designed to confer benefits on the mother country primarily, though it was not without substantial benefit to the colonies. The private monopolies that were typical of mercantilism in effect constituted a subsidy to favored private firms. Rules and regulations to limit competition in colonial production and markets reinforced this form of subsidy. On the other hand, generous subsidies or bounties were employed to encourage production of those colonial resources in short supply in Britain. Defense, provided at no direct cost to the beneficiaries, was yet another form of subsidy. It was Britain's effort to force the American colonies to pay their full share of defense costs that led to the post-1763 taxation that they rejected.

Americans appreciated the benefits a mercantile system could confer and, once freed of British rule, appropriated many for themselves. For example, one of the first steps taken by Congress under the Constitution was to enact port duties that gave preference to American flag vessels. Later, Congress conferred a monopoly of coastal navigation on American-built and owned shipping. During the 19th century, ocean-going, foreign-built vessels could not be registered under the American flag, and ocean mail service was subsidized. The federal government therefore acted as an ally of American shipbuilders and owners, to promote profitable, private investment in an American merchant marine, which was the young nation's lifeline to world markets.

Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury, was a major advocate of such subsidies. To spur economic growth he advocated not only navigation laws but bounties and favorable commercial laws to assist American business. In his 1791 Report on Manufactures, Hamilton underlined the need for "pecuniary bounties" to encourage the industries of the new Republic. Beginning in 1816, protective tariffs sheltered American manufacturers from competition with the lower-cost products of more developed nations. This protectionist philosophy, with relatively few exceptions, came to characterize American foreign trade policy until the 1930's, even though once infant industries grew to mature giants which scarcely needed the protection.

Beginning in 1785, the transfer of the public domain to private hands helped to subsidize private enterprise. Originally utilized as a reward for military service and to encourage settlement of western lands, the disposition of the public lands to promoters of canals, railroads and other public improvements subsequently became a central fixture of economic growth policies at both state and federal levels.

Subsidies, direct and indirect, were also used to spur invention. The federal patent law, for example, in effect subsidized invention by conferring monopoly benefits on the patent holder for a period of years. A direct federal subsidy of $30,000 aided S.F.B. Morse to construct the first telegraph line in the country between Baltimore and Washington in 1844. New transportation enterprises were subsidized by state governments not only by financial assistance and by land grants but also by grants of monopoly rights in the territory they served.

Regulation of private enterprise was attempted in the colonies from the beginning for both practical and ideological reasons. The colonists' foothold on the continent was precarious, and Puritan Massachusetts, for example, knew that the world was watching the Bay Colony. It was important to the community therefore that its members not be exploited; yet the contributions of private enterprise to growth were also recognized as important. Thus, while Robert Keayne, a leading Boston merchant of the 1630's, was condemned by both secular and religious authorities for price-gouging, his punishment was relatively light. Efforts to regulate both prices and wages failed in 17th century Massachusetts because they did not fit a raw, new country that invited private enterprise. Indeed, it was nearly 300 years before the effort to regulate prices and wages was seriously revived in the midst of world conflict in a greatly changed nation.

Legislation to regulate weights, measures, and other standards of bulk or quality where the buyer might be bilked was typical of most states, as it had been in the colonies; regulation of competitive practices was not. Control of prices by either private parties or by government was regarded by Americans as a serious threat to the basic mechanism of an enterprise economy. Accordingly, when the excesses of 19th century competition led to a widespread demand for corrective action, the emphasis was naturally placed on regulation of practices that circumvented or prevented competition.

The conditions of railroad competition first gave rise to significant business regulation. Endowed with monopoly rights initially but subsequently confronted with mounting, sometimes ruinous competition, railroad managers were both tempted and forced to take every step to protect and maximize their revenues. Where a road was not faced with a competitor, there was a strong temptation to raise rates to the highest possible level, generally determined by the next best transportation alternative. Where there was competition, rates were often forced down to unremunerative levels, and the loss had to be made up on other routes. As a result, it could cost more to ship a short distance where there was only one railroad than to ship over a long distance where there were several.

Since assured and regular volume shipments meant greater efficiency and profit in railroad operation, large shippers received preferential rates and service to the detriment of their competitors. And, as in the case of Standard Oil, these large shippers could sometimes exert significant pressure on competing railroads by playing one off against another. The rigors of this type of competition naturally led railroad owners and managers to seek ways of easing them. One answer was found in voluntary associations, or pools, that divided rail shipments between common terminals and otherwise competing routes. Frequently they fixed rates as well. This obvious device to eliminate competition between railroads prevented shippers, indeed whole sections of the country, from realizing the lower rates that would have otherwise prevailed.

Initially it was believed that publicity alone could prevent abuses in railroad rate-setting and other anti-competitive practices. In the eastern states, commissions were early established to oversee railroad development, but they were "weak" commissions because their powers were limited primarily to receiving reports from the roads. This procedure did little to uncover abuses or correct them.

The demand for sterner action developed in the Middle West after the Civil War. States and communities that earlier had taxed themselves and extended subsidies to win railroad connections with larger markets found too often that their generosity was not reflected in the rail rates and services made available to them. The railroad welcomed as a savior in many communities was therefore soon attacked as an octopus whose tentacles reached relentlessly into the pocketbooks of its patrons and early benefactors. This change of attitude toward railroads was especially true in the grain-growing states, where railroads not only owned the

grain elevators that constituted the farmers' market but often also provided the only route to regional entrepôts such as Chicago.

The discontented farmers organized soon after the Civil War and began to gain control of state legislatures in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. These states adopted a series of regulatory statutes known as "Granger laws" that created new, "strong" commissions with power over railroad rates and practices. A major test of their authority came in 1872 when a railroad challenged the power of the state of Illinois to regulate grain-elevator rates as taking property without due process of law. In the landmark case of *Munn v. Illinois* (1877) the United States Supreme Court handed down the decision that a grain elevator constituted a public market and was therefore subject to public regulation. This decision opened the way for further state regulation of common carriers, but a decade later in the *Wabash* case the Supreme Court declared that interstate commerce was solely within the jurisdiction of the federal government. Since most railroads were interstate carriers, the foundations for state regulation were demolished. Congress had to act, or railroads would escape regulation completely.

Congress did act in 1887, passing the Interstate Commerce Act, the first national regulatory statute. Essentially the bill outlawed the pools through which the railroads had tried to restrict competition, the practice of charging more for long than short hauls under comparable conditions, the giving of rebates to favored shippers and free passes to legislators, and the like. Rates had to be posted for public inspection. Enforcement was entrusted to a Commission, which was assumed to be more expert and flexible than Congress could hope to be in dealing with any given industry such as railroads.

The subsequent history of the Interstate Commerce Act gave more support to its critics than its champions. The United States Supreme Court quickly struck down some of the key provisions of the law as unconstitutionally invading private property rights. Responding to the leadership and public pressures generated by President Theodore Roosevelt, Congress reenacted and strengthened the key provisions of the Interstate Commerce Act during the first decade of this century. But the composition of the Commission did little to insure vigorous enforcement. The deliberate isolation of its members from other arms of government, regarded initially as a strength of the Commission form, made the Commissioners' contacts primarily with those whom they were supposed to regulate. In this case familiarity did not breed contempt but often friendship and more sympathy for the railroads' problems than the public's. Lack of adequate funds and staff, the adding of additional jurisdictions over oil pipelines, express companies, private car lines and the like, caused the Commission to rely on adversary proceedings to initiate cases. Those who were hurt by railroad rates or practices were thus made responsible for launching proceedings against them, but the costs and time involved discouraged many shippers from taking this route. The job of determining whether rates were fair required valuation proceedings for each railroad, a gargantuan and time-consuming task. It was not authorized until 1913 and took some twenty years to complete.

Meanwhile, the railroad problem had changed complexion completely. Some railroads had been in financial trouble before the Interstate Commerce Act was passed; in the decade following its enactment over a third of the nation's railroads was in various stages of bankruptcy. During World War I, the roads proved incapable of meeting the heavy demands placed on them and were taken over by the federal government. When they were returned to private ownership in 1920, the accompanying legislation specified that promotion of a national transportation system was a national policy. Various subsidies and a congressional directive to plan more rational regional rail systems were included in the legislation. The Interstate Commerce Commission, created to keep railroads in line, was now charged with promoting and assisting them.

In the post-World War I period, the railroads' plight worsened as motor carriers took to the highways in increasing numbers. In 1935 the ICC's job was further complicated when it was given jurisdiction over this competing form of transportation. With the exception of World War II when the railroads performed more than adequately under private ownership, profitability was a sometime thing. Passenger traffic became so unprofitable that it had virtually disappeared by the 1970's, with the remaining interstate service heavily subsidized by the federal government.

Some charge that excessive regulation by the ICC has contributed significantly to this state of affairs, that railroads have been unfairly penalized in their competition with other, newer types of carriers, and that the answer to the railroads' problems lies in substantial deregulation of the industry. This sentiment is shared in high government circles. President Gerald Ford in early 1975 promised to send Congress proposals "To reverse this trend of costly . . . growing regulation" as it relates to railroads, trucking, and airlines.

Whatever the practical defects of regulation by independent Commissions, the concept was vigorously endorsed by reformers at the turn of the century. It seemed to them to leave private enterprise free to engage in legitimate competition but to give the public needed protection against abuses. They particularly liked the idea of the expertise that would supposedly characterize the membership of such Commissions, overlooking the fact that appointments were also political. The Federal Trade Commission, established in 1914 to be a watchdog over unfair competitive practices, was a product of this thinking. But even more than the ICC, the FTC proved to be a paper tiger for its first two decades. More successful was the Federal Reserve System, created in 1913, which provided a new means of controlling the nation's money supply.

Meanwhile, the power over basic industries represented by the growth of trusts led to a new form of indirect regulation of business. In the wake of similar statutes adopted by several states, Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890, barring restraints on interstate commerce resulting from combinations and also outlawing monopolizing. Initial enforcement and interpretation did little to curb the combination movement at the turn of the century. Under Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, however, stepped-up enforcement resulted in government victories over some of the major trusts, including Standard Oil and American Tobacco. But the Supreme Court in these cases made it clear that the statute did not apply to "reasonable restraints" of trade, and in 1920 it ruled that size *per se* was not an offense. Subsequent antitrust legislation passed in the 1930's seemed to some to be directed more to protecting small competitors than competition itself. In the 1950's and 1960's, new combinations called "conglomerates" were put together in such a way as to avoid monopolizing any single field of endeavor. Many large companies turned their attention and expansion efforts to overseas markets, where domestic antitrust policy was largely irrelevant.

Antitrust policy has served useful purposes, but it has also proved a slow, costly, and uncertain remedy for preserving competition in a fast-moving economy. In view of statutory exemptions and government policies encouraging some forms of monopoly practices, antitrust legislation may be viewed as a monument to our national allegiance to the concept of classical price competition fully as much as to its substance.

During World War I to meet the need for more direct government intervention in the economy, boards, agencies and commissions handled such varied tasks as the creation and operation of a wartime merchant fleet, mobilization and allocation of industrial war production, and operation of the railroads. It was typical, however, that businessmen took the lead in calling for the creation of such bodies and then served, in many cases, on those that governed their own industries and companies. While defensible on the grounds of the genuine expertise required, potential conflicts of interest clearly existed. The leaders of this movement for business-government cooperation feared that the alternative might be a government takeover of key industries under the pressure of wartime demands, or afterwards. Therefore, they preferred to minimize that possibility by taking the initiative in setting the nature of the relationship.

During the 1920's the pro-business attitudes of the federal government were reflected in Calvin Coolidge's statement that "the business of government is business." The new laissez-faire policies encouraged the second great merger movement in American history, tolerated major abuses in securities promotion, and overlooked excesses of competitive and noncompetitive business practices. But the aftermath in the 1930's called for unprecedented peacetime steps by government to cope with economic and business disaster. It was against this background that the Securities and Exchange Commission was established in 1934 to protect investors against fraud, again, as in the early history of railroad regulation, relying heavily on publicity. The SEC was only one of a number of regulatory commissions established in that depression decade, including the Federal Communications Commission, with jurisdiction over broadcast licensing; the Civil Aeronautics Board, the ICC's counterpart in the aviation industry; and the Maritime Commission, which subsidized and supervised the ailing merchant marine.

In the post-World War II era, new regulatory agencies mushroomed within and outside existing departments of government as the nation turned to new challenges and old problems. The Atomic Energy Commission supervised and controlled peaceful private uses of this new energy source developed as a government monopoly. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, typical of major research and development projects of the post-World War II era, directed, funded and coordinated the nation's space effort in cooperation with a new aerospace industry whose market was almost exclusively the government. As the nation became concerned about pollution of the environment, shortages of energy, and the safety of workers and consumer products, new agencies with direct regulatory powers over business were added to a mushrooming bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, the government had assumed basic responsibility for the health of the economy. During the 1930's it had gradually been forced into this role of stimulating demand and investment through monetary and fiscal policies. In 1946 the Employment Act bound the federal government to maintain full employment, though again the sanctity of private enterprise required it be acknowledged as the primary vehicle. Government expenditures for defense and foreign aid subsidized a number of industries, including the merchant marine which was guaranteed at least 50 percent of overseas aid shipments. When Lockheed, the largest defense contractor, found itself in trouble, government came to the rescue. When the Penn-Central Railroad, the nation's largest railroad, was threatened with collapse, it requested and received similar assistance. Government had become not only the regulator but also the guarantor of business, especially of firms that could not survive on their own but were important to the economy. But even the smallest business was also made eligible for low-interest, government-backed loans.

Favorable government treatment and subsidization have ranged across the whole economy, from a depletion allowance for petroleum products to investment credits for manufacturers, but a prime beneficiary has been agriculture. Following World War I bumper crops, aided by federally subsidized research and more efficient farm machinery and techniques, found a dearth of buyers. Beginning in the late 1920's the federal government attempted to provide a market for surplus crops. By 1933 it was not only providing a guaranteed market but paying farmers not to produce in the hopes of curbing excessive supplies. In the South that same year the Tennessee Valley Authority was authorized to engage in multiple-purpose dam construction and the associated generation of cheap electricity. Subsidized by taxpayers outside the Valley, this pioneering governmental venture supplanted local private power companies but helped to attract other firms that needed large amounts of cheap energy.

Clearly the free, private enterprise of the 19th century has undergone substantial change in the last 75 years. While privately owned enterprise has continued to flourish, it is not free in the sense of businessmen making decisions without reference to money rates controlled by the Federal Reserve System, taxation controlled by Congress, or to a host of federal and state regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over specific areas of business ranging from labor conditions to smoke emission.

Selling the Consumer

The United States is a consumer society. The variety, range in price, and amount of goods available to us are the envy of the world. In many respects competition in appealing to the consumer is the result of a productive system that decades ago surpassed the meeting of basic needs. The very term "selling" suggests that the desire to buy must be created in the consumer and reinforced by the values and mores of the society. The rise of advertising and marketing have paralleled the development of mass production for a mass market, served by a national distribution system.

In the colonial era there was little effort at selling, because there was little need. Signs outside shops indicated their content, and basic commodities arrived by ship, but their availability was made known primarily through a newspaper notice of the ship's arrival. Sometimes the availability of imported goods was publicized simply by listing them in a newspaper. In his typical innovative fashion, Benjamin Franklin was the first to draw the reader's attention to these announcements by breaking these long lists into paragraphs.

Early retail selling was done not only in shops but by peddlers who traveled through the countryside with their wares. Sales were governed by *caveat emptor*—let the buyer beware. A typical transaction might involve cash, credit or barter. There was no guarantee of quality, and price was subject to haggling between seller and buyer.

As long as markets were primarily local ones, the consumer had relatively little choice. Where there was only a single store in a community, it enjoyed a monopoly in meeting the needs of local inhabitants, frequently reinforced by extending credit, which the merchant in turn obtained from his suppliers in the regional center. Luxury goods were for the wealthy in the larger northern centers or on southern plantations and for the most part were ordered directly from abroad.

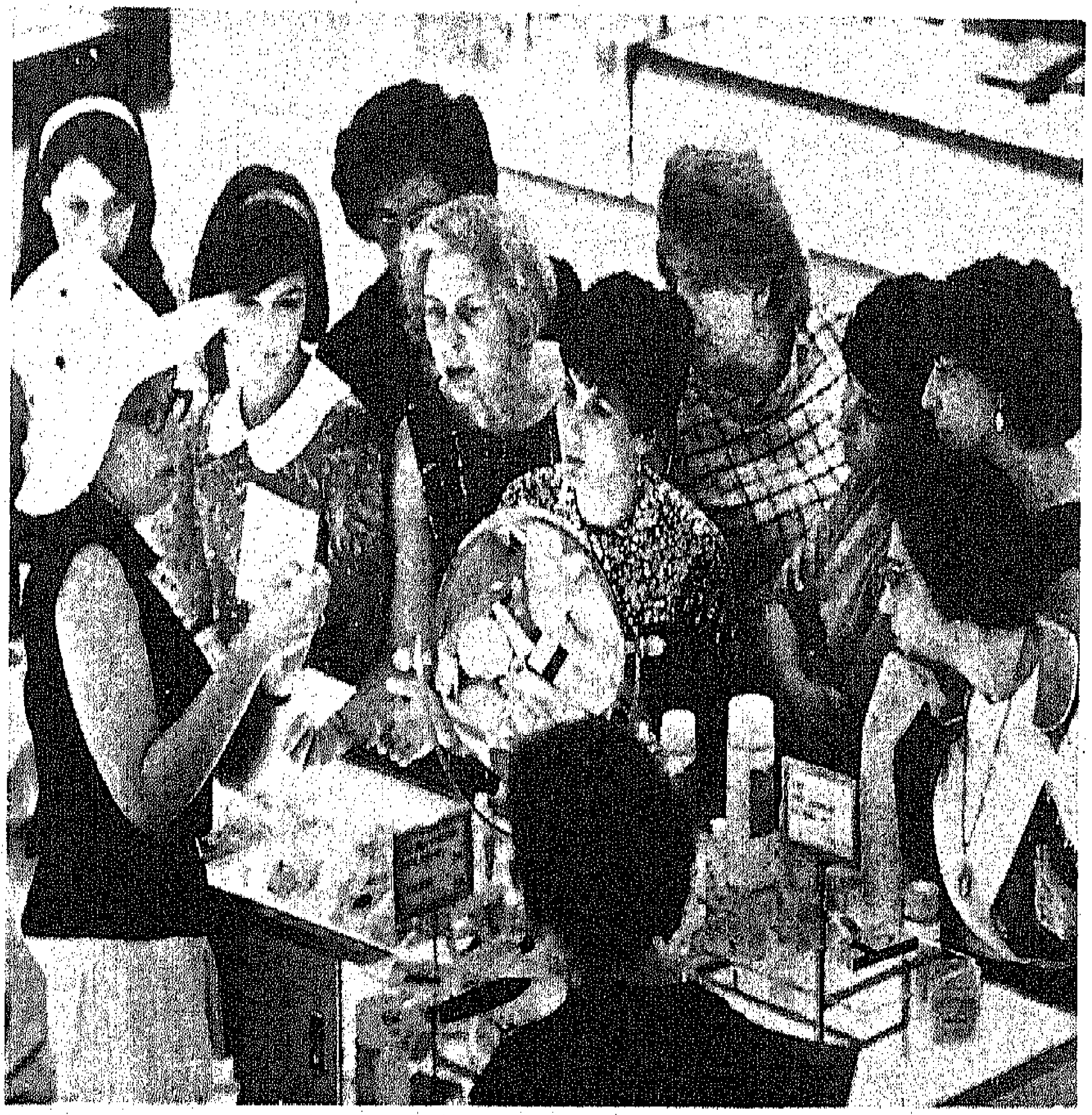
Material evidences of social status have been important in encouraging consumption since colonial days. In the mid-18th century, Boston merchant Thomas Hancock, for example, often ordered luxury items from his correspondents abroad, including a fancy coach with his own and his wife's coat of arms handsomely inscribed on it. As a thrifty Yankee, Hancock felt compelled to explain to this agent that the latter purchase was not for the sake of vanity but "for the Benefitt of Mrs. Hancock's health."

As the means to acquire luxuries increased for some Americans, especially in the latter part of the 19th century, it led to indiscriminate displays of wealth. The period has been called "The Gilded Age" and "The Age of Excess." It was characterized at one end of the social scale by yachts, mansions, and social extravaganzas that often proved wealth more than good taste. Shortly after the turn of this century, the economist Thorstein Veblen coined the term "conspicuous consumption" to describe such demonstrations of ability to waste resources on a prodigal scale.

As the productive machinery of the country moved into high gear, the need to appeal to a wide range of buyers increased. Advertising became a more specialized occupation, initially as the product of newspaper initiative. American newspapers increased in number from an estimated 72 in 1790 to well over 5,000 in 1860, and their growth was increasingly dependent on advertising. Beginning in 1869 N. W. Ayer, the founder of one of the nation's first advertising agencies, specialized in selling newspaper space as an agent of the newspaper. As his business evolved, Ayer himself bought newspaper space wholesale and retailed it to his clients. It was not long before his agency was acting for his clients in designing advertising programs and buying newspaper space to implement them.

New methods of retail trade increased the need for advertising. America's first "merchant prince," Alexander T. Stewart, an Irish immigrant, transformed traditional methods of retailing. In 1823 he established a store in New York City, where he experimented with offering goods at a fixed price and guaranteeing customer satisfaction. Later, Stewart brought together under one roof the equivalent of a number of specialty stores, in effect creating the first modern department store. It became so famous that Mrs. Abraham Lincoln turned to Stewart's for goods to redecorate the White House.

John Wanamaker of Philadelphia saw the potential of this new approach to merchandising. As early as 1865 he offered customers a "money back" guarantee. In 1878 he established a large department store in a former Pennsylvania Railroad warehouse in Philadelphia. Later, Wanamaker's took over the Stewart location in New York City, competing with Macy's and Gimbel's, which were among the nation's leading



A demonstration of a new cosmetic product. A new item is often test-marketed in selected outlets to determine if it should be offered to the general public, or if it needs further improvement.

department stores. In Chicago, Potter Palmer led the way beginning in the mid-1850's, with Marshall Field as his successor a decade later.

Advertising in the press and periodicals kept pace with these developments, growing 80 percent in the 1880's. Stores described, pictured, and priced their goods in mass circulation dailies so customers could shop and compare prices before leaving their homes. Advertising of brand-name items in national periodicals was commonplace by the 1890's. Merchants also recognized that shopping itself could be a form of advertising. F. W. Woolworth, who established a chain of low-price retail stores in the 1880's, admonished his managers, "Remember our advertisements are in our show windows and on our counters." Aggressive merchants decorated their stores to make shopping a pleasurable experience, as well as featuring seasonal events, such as choral performances at Christmas time, to attract patrons. Annual and special sales were inaugurated to clear out inventory and attract customer interest during slack seasons. "Give the lady what she wants" became the philosophy of successful retailers.

While department stores were being developed in large population centers and copied in smaller ones, a new concept of operating specialized stores under common ownership in a number of communities was emerging. The so-called "chain store" was exemplified by the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, founded in 1858. Initially selling tea and coffee at low prices as a result of eliminating middlemen, A & P stores added groceries, their quality associated with the name A & P and their price benefiting from the chain's mass purchasing power. Starting in major cities, these stores were found in even small towns by the turn of the century.

The emergence of a national distribution system undermined the position of the local store, butcher, and baker. The National Biscuit Company, a product of the turn-of-the century merger movement, catered to a national market for bakery goods. Where the local general store dispensed crackers of indeterminate age and quality from a barrel, trademarked NABISCO crackers came neatly packaged, quality guaranteed, with stocks regularly replaced to insure freshness. National marketers like Swift and Armour sold meat in much the same way, with quality presumably assured by government inspectors whose services were not available to small-scale local butchers.

Selling the consumer involved increased emphasis on fashion, design and packaging, as well as price. Shoes, for example, were hand-made to order in the early 19th century. As production was switched to machines and volume output, shoe manufacturers came to specialize in men's and women's styles. Cost was lowered and fashion, especially for ladies, played a leading role in saleability. The same trends characterized ready-to-wear clothing, also made possible by the sewing machine and mass production. *Godey's Lady's Book*, founded in 1837, was one of the first of many to provide female readers with news of the latest clothing styles. Before 1860 it had a monthly circulation of 150,000. New York City became a major clothes manufacturing center, for the exclusive Paris gown could be reproduced in low-price imitations in New York's garment district and quickly made available to American customers across the entire nation.

As products of the new technologies became available, the public had to be convinced to try them. To make his new method of electric illumination more acceptable, Thomas Edison in the 1880's deliberately copied the way in which illuminating gas was then being delivered to individual homes. Department stores, yachts, banks, and homes of the wealthy became showplaces for the wonders of electricity. Work- time- and space-saving electric appliances were introduced to the housewife—sold by demonstration—special rates—and the basic appeal of relief from drudgery. The material standards of success, translated into "keeping up with the Joneses," insured that the household without electricity was regarded as old-fashioned and backward. Many of the same techniques were employed to win the newly invented telephone a similar place of honor in the American home.

If electricity and the telephone changed the American way of life in the late nineteenth century, the automobile gave it an entirely new dimension a few decades later. Henry Ford had watched pioneer car manufacturers introduce motorcars by selling them to the well-to-do as prestige symbols. Like them he tried this route and did his share of attracting public attention by race driving. But he saw that there was a major market, especially in rural America where his own roots lay, for a relatively inexpensive and reliable car. In 1908 he introduced the Model T, cheap by contemporary standards, incorporating several ingenious innovations, rugged, and easily repaired by any owner with a modicum of mechanical ability. The "T", available only in black and remaining virtually unchanged from one year to the next, swept the automotive field. Sold only for cash, it was the standard of motor car transportation for most Americans for over 15 years, despite the introduction of innumerable other makes, most of which disappeared after a few years. Meanwhile, Ford, profiting from mass production and the assembly-line techniques that he introduced, steadily reduced the price of his car and correspondingly increased the size of his market.

But the public was ready for something different after World War I. An M.I.T.-educated engineer, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., recognized the possibilities after he took over leadership of the General Motors Corporation. Under his leadership, vigorous new marketing techniques were introduced in automobile sales. GM offered a line of cars at various price levels, carefully bracketing Ford. Playing on the prestige element, GM pioneered the expensive but successful annual model change. Cars were made available in different models, colors, and with many options. Furthermore, they could be purchased on credit. This kind of marketing confirmed the automobile's place as a status symbol as well as a means of transportation; at the same time low-income buyers were encouraged to participate in this new form of conspicuous consumption. The effectiveness of these marketing techniques, coupled with aggressive advertising, enabled General Motors to project in advance the likely return on its investment. The Chrysler organization, formed in the mid-1920's followed the same techniques, which required major investment in production and marketing, themselves effectively barring new entrants.

Many consumer goods came to be marketed and priced in the same way. Cigarettes, machine-produced by the millions, were sold throughout the country before the turn of the century. Advertising made cigarette smoking fashionable and, as an alternative to sweets during the sugar shortage of World War I, patriotic. As with the automobile industry, control of the cigarette market fell into a few hands, with massive national advertising developing strong brand preferences despite little difference in the tobacco itself. The same type of vigorous advertising successfully promoted soft drinks, like Coca Cola. Generations of Americans became accustomed to buying only brand-name consumer products that were nationally advertised and nationally available.

Introduction of home radio in the 1920's and television thirty years later gave a new dimension to mass marketing. Though federally regulated, broadcasting was a private enterprise dependent on advertising revenues. Programs of entertainment were interspersed with commercials that lauded products ranging from deodorants to new cars. Mushrooming advertising agencies developed and packaged broad-based advertising programs that included all the media and made it virtually impossible for any American to escape their net.

Some claimed that Madison Avenue in New York City, the home of leading advertising agencies, controlled American tastes. They familiarized the American family with a staggering variety of goods and services, which made even the humblest American household incomparably better equipped, fed and entertained than its counterparts throughout most of the world. The post-World War II introduction of frozen foods freed the housewife from much of the drudgery of meal preparation, and it was only a step to introducing the frozen TV dinner, which freed her

from even the need for minimal meal planning. The products of American farms and factories and those of all the world were made available in sprawling, self-service supermarkets and discount stores, where the customer could roam at leisure through aisles of eye-catching merchandise. The automobile and the post-World War II rush to the suburbs emptied downtown areas of all but the most firmly established stores, which in self-defense themselves had to establish suburban branches. Items that found public appeal were quickly imitated, and volume sales permitted lowered prices. Thus the profits of innovation were quickly eroded and pressure to introduce yet another new product, gadget or service intensified.

As materials changed with changing technology, items made from the older materials lost ground to the newer ones. Cellophane replaced tinfoil and paper in packaging; aluminum became a competitor of tinplate in containers; plastics replaced wood and other materials for many products, some of which could only be fashioned inexpensively from this new man-made material. The same was true in textiles, where traditional cotton and wool were complemented and sometimes displaced by man-made fibres. Wash-and-wear clothing, and permanently pressed garments made from these new materials, further eased the housewife's chores.

Selling the consumer has become an integral part of American business and has profoundly influenced American life. It has not been without challenges on a number of scores. In a rich and well endowed country, there was perhaps room for waste. But how much waste of resources could the nation tolerate? In the 1970's the large car, still a status symbol loaded with energy-consuming devices, was seriously under attack as the nation came face to face with an oil shortage. How many brands of tooth-paste, substantially identical in their functional utility, did the country need? Use of broadcast media to purvey entertainment too often geared to the lowest common denominator, frequently interspersed with tasteless commercials, seemed to defy their educational potential. The refuse of a consumer society threatened the environment and required significant public expenditures to cope with it. Non-biodegradable plastic bottles and containers dotted the nation's landscape and waters; beverage containers littered highways. Federal legislation was aimed at coping with many of these problems and particularly with the safety of consumer items, but habits ingrained in generations of Americans by those who catered to their every whim were changed only slowly.

Advocates of selling the consumer had many arguments on their side. Basically, they argued the consumer was sovereign. Advertising was indispensable to make him aware of the many choices available to him. The consumer got what he or she wanted. Competition insured a wide variety of choices and range of prices, credit with which to make purchases, and a constant effort to find new ways of titillating appetites for goods and services and to fill needs. Even the most powerful private enterprise could not force its judgment on an unreceptive public. The example often cited was the Edsel car of the late 1950's, which car buyers rejected despite the best marketing efforts of the Ford Motor Company.

Developments of the late 1960's and early 1970's suggest that the days of the consumer society, at least in its familiar form, may be numbered. The United States with some 6 percent of the world's population was consuming well over a third of the world's resources. The list of raw materials once regarded as inexhaustible from domestic sources is being replaced by a growing list of those that have to be imported from abroad. The American consumer society is consuming not only its own rich inheritance but that of the rest of the world as well. The energy crisis of 1973 and its continuing reverberations awakened some to the nation's dependence on imported petroleum, but the task of reorienting a consumer society to the new realities remains a major challenge to all Americans. Selling the consumer promises to be more difficult than in the past; indeed, the techniques developed to whet the consumer's appetite for more goods and services are increasingly being turned to encouraging curtailment of excessive consumption.

Epilogue

The business of America has been economic growth for most of the past two hundred years. Reliance on private initiative and enterprise produced impressive growth, accompanied by impressive waste. On the whole, however, the American standard of living has become the envy of the world. The challenge is to retain what has proved good in the private enterprise system while at the same time recognizing that our past visions of growth must be modified, the shortcomings of reliance on self-interest to promote the social good must be recognized, yet at the same time the central place of the individual in our economic system must not be lost. It is therefore fitting in our bicentennial year to call attention to the need for accelerated evolutionary change as an alternative to the uncertain outcome of revolutionary change such as that the American colonists risked in 1776. Our worlds are very different, but belief in our ability to shape our own destiny is and should remain a common tie between our past and future.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Robert Heilbroner, *The Making of Economic Society* (Prentice-Hall, 1972, 4th edn.) is a readable introduction to the subject. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

John Chamberlain, *The Enterprising American: A Business History of the United States* (Harper & Row, 1963) is an entertaining popular account.

Thomas C. Cochran, *Business and American Life: A History* (McGraw-Hill, 1972) supplements Chamberlain's entertaining account. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Harvard University Press, 1955) is a standard introduction to the subject. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

W. T. Baxter, *The House of Hancock: Business in Boston, 1724-1775* (Harvard University Press, 1945) is a detailed study of the activities of a colonial merchant.

Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (The Free Press, 1945) is a classic on the subject. **ND/B/C/AUC**

Robert E. Brown, *Charles Beard and the Constitution* (Princeton University Press, 1956) is a critical analysis of Beard's classic. **ND/B/M**

James Willard Hurst, *Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth Century United States* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1967) provides useful insights on the environment of enterprise in that era.

Stuart Bruchey, *Growth of the Modern American Economy* (Dodd, Mead, 1975) is a concise overview beginning with 1790.

H. J. Habakkuk, *American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1962) is a study on the role of technology.

Paul W. Gates, *The Farmer's Age, Agriculture, 1815-1860* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960) is useful overview of agricultural change. **C**

Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton and his Retainers* (University of Kentucky Press, 1968) deals with the cotton South.

Ralph W. Hidy, *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance* (Harvard University Press, 1949) examines the role of capital in the growing economy from the standpoint of an English banking house.

George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1951) is a survey of the transportation revolution. ND/B/C/M/AUC

Carter Goodrich, *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads, 1800-1890* (Columbia University Press, 1960) tells the story of the transportation.

Bray Hammond, *Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton University Press, 1957) is a study on banking developments. M

Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (Harcourt, Brace, 1955) traces the conflicting intellectual currents and economic interests. ND/C/M/AUC

Jonathan Hughes, *The Vital Few* (Houghton Mifflin, 1965) presents post-Civil War industrial leaders in a favorable light. ND/B/C/M/AUC

Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons* (Harcourt, Brace, 1934) provides the classic indictment of the same leaders.

Edward C. Kirkland, *Industry Comes of Age: Business, Labor & Public Policy, 1860-1897* (Quadrangle Books, 1967) puts the above interpretations in a broader perspective. ND/B/M/AUC

Oscar and **Mary Flug Handlin,** *Commonwealth: A Study in the Role of Government in the American Economy, Massachusetts, 1774-1861* (New York University Press, 1947) illustrates early governmental concern with the economy at the state level. C/AUC

Robert W. Fogel, *The Union Pacific Railroad: A Case in Premature Enterprise* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960) examines the validity of federal aid to the first transcontinental railroad.

Lee Benson, *Merchants, Farmers, and Railroads: Railroad Regulation and New York Politics, 1850-1887* (Harvard University Press, 1955) analyzes the origins of federal railroad regulation with particular reference to New York.

Gabriel Kolko, *Railroads and Regulation, 1877-1916* (Princeton University Press, 1965) challenges the view that railroad leaders opposed regulation. ND

Herman E. Krooss, *Executive Opinion: What Business Leaders Said and Thought 1920's–1960's* (Doubleday, 1970) examines business attitudes toward government, as well as other elements of the business environment. C/M

Edward C. Kirkland, *Dream & Thought in the Business Community, 1860-1900* (Quadrangle Books, 1964) provides an instructive basis for comparison.

Robert Sobel, *The Age of Giant Corporations, a Microeconomic History of American Business, 1914-1970* (Greenwood Press, 1972) is an excellent introduction to the subject.

John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Industrial State* (Houghton Mifflin, 1967) provides a provocative interpretation of the significance of new government-business relationships. ND/B/C/M/AUC

Morton Mintz and **Jerry S. Cohen,** *America, Inc. Who Owns and Operates the United States* (Dell Publishing Co., 1971) is written for the general public and, among other things, attacks Galbraith's support of giantism in business.

Frank Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising* (Doubleday, Doran, 1929) is a standard reference book on the subject.

Ralph Hower, *The History of an Advertising Agency: N. W. Ayer & Son at Work, 1869-1949* (Harvard University Press, 1949) provides more general information than the title suggests.

Tom Mahoney and **Leonard Sloane,** *The Great Merchants* (Harper & Row, 1966) covers the history of major retail firms. C

Boris Emmett and **John E. Jeuck,** *Catalogues and Counters, A History of Sears, Roebuck and Company* (University of Chicago Press, 1950) is an interesting account of this American institution.

David Potter, *People of Plenty* (University of Chicago Press, 1949) relates abundance to the formation of American character. ND/B/C/M/AUC

John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Houghton Mifflin, 1969) argues that production fills a void that it has itself created. ND/B/C/M/AUC

Donella H. Meadows and **others,** *The Limits to Growth* (Universe Books, 1972) stresses the finite constraints on continued economic growth. ND/B/C/M/AUC

Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (Bantam Books, 1971) treats the same subject. ND/B/C/M

Richard C. Edwards, Michael Reich, and **Thomas E. Weisskopf,** eds., *The Capitalist System, A Radical Analysis of American Society* (Prentice-Hall, 1972) presents a variety

of views challenging the assumptions and results of American capitalism.	
Peter Drucker, *Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society* (Harper & Row, 1969) presents another interpretation on the theme.	**ND/B/C/M**
Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society, A Venture in Social Forecasting* (Basic Books, 1973) discusses the same subject.	**ND/B/C/M/AUC**

AMERICA IN THE WORLD

by NORMAN A. GRAEBNER

With the Declaration of Independence two centuries ago the American people accepted both the risks and the advantages of a separate national existence. Even then their involvement in the international politics of Europe was not new. As members of the British Empire they could not escape the intellectual and diplomatic influence of the European state system. To maintain a semblance of order and protect the security, if not the existence, of each state, that system attempted to check the selfishness of men and the ambitions of nations with counterchecks composed of opposing combinations of power. Diplomacy's function was that of managing the system through the process of negotiation. The professional diplomat served the sovereign authority of his country abroad, to adjust conflicts in time of peace, to seek allies and isolate enemies in time of war.

Americans, lacking significant power of their own, soon discovered the possibilities of exploiting the European system to their advantage. Britain and France, the world's leading powers, entered the 18th century as rivals in Europe and America. Toward Britain the Americans were faithful subjects, enjoying the benefits of empire without sharing its burdens. But their outlook was continental no less than European, and stretching from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi lay the French Empire, blocking the imperial ambitions of the English seaboard colonies. As England turned its power on the French positions in America during the great French and Indian War, Benjamin Franklin and others argued successfully in London that British interests demanded the elimination of France from the North American continent.

Having pointedly reaffirmed their devotion to the empire after 1763, Americans could scarcely have anticipated war with England a dozen years later. Still British imperial policy, tied after 1764 to new commercial and taxing measures, challenged American interests and freedoms on too many fronts. By denying the colonists access to British policy-making processes, the London government gave the Americans the simple choice between capitulation to Parliamentary authority or war. The Americans ultimately accepted the need to fight. Still, without successful war they would not secure their rights; without the aid of France, seeking a new balance in European affairs, the colonists would not achieve the needed victory. And for Paris any cause which promised less than the breakup of England's New World empire was not worth the price of war. Thus Britain, in denying its ambitious, self-confident, and well-led colonies their rights, drove them into a successful struggle for independence.

Two centuries later the international order scarcely resembles that which the Republic entered in the 18th century. Changes in communications, technology, weaponry, and trade compel countries to negotiate on a wider spectrum of issues. The democratization of the diplomatic process renders diplomacy more public and less flexible. What is more, 200 years brought the United States to the center of the state system. Still the continuity in the nation's external relations remains profound. Basic American interests have changed imperceptibly. For Alexander Hamilton, writing in *The Federalist*, those interests in the 1790's demanded coercive force to sustain adequate relations with other countries, the perpetuation of the European balancing structure, expanding opportunities for commerce, and an ascendant position "in the system of American affairs." To influence the international order, early American leaders employed whatever advantages came to hand: a popular democratic ideology, economic and military power, and a diplomacy rendered promising by the advantages of geography. How American leaders used these four elements in foreign policy has determined the character and quality of the American experience as a nation among nations.

The American "Dream" Among Nations

More than any other nation in history the United States has carried a burden of obligation toward the oppressed of mankind. It is a burden, to be sure, which has never been recognized or shared by all citizens. Indeed, it has seldom been the ultimate determinant in American policy. But there have always been Americans, often distinguished and highly-placed, who have demanded in times of revolution and repression that the United States pursue no less than the cause of humanity. This sense of mission has stimulated every important foreign policy debate in the nation's history and it, more than any other factor, explains the magnitude of the disagreements which have characterized the American outlook on world affairs.

This sense of mission sprang from two essential factors in the country's early experience: the providential advantage offered by the New World and the political ideology of the American Revolution. Even before his ship touched the New England coast in 1630, John Winthrop admonished his fellow Puritans: "Wee shall be as a citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us; soe that if wee shall deal falsely with our God in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world." What followed—the profitable exploitation of a rich continent—merely confirmed that sense of destiny. It required no more than the amalgamation of opportunity and liberty to convince the leaders of 1776 that their Revolution must serve as a model for the world. Franklin spoke for that generation when he wrote in 1782: "Establishing the liberties of America will not only make the people happy, but will have some effect in diminishing the misery of those, who in other parts of the world groan under despotism, by rendering it more circumspect, and inducing it to govern with a lighter hand." The American Revolution, as an assertion of the unalienable rights of man, had put the liberal ideas of the 18th century Enlightenment into practice.

During his first administration George Washington recognized the dangers of placing American foreign policy on the altar of idealism. No less than Franklin and others, he acknowledged that the preservation of liberty depended "on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." Still he refused to commit American power to the support of France's revolutionary cause. Washington warned his countrymen, in matters of foreign policy, to consult no more than the permanent interests of their country. He declard that "it is a maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted further than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it." Again in his Farewell Address Washington warned the Republic: "The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest."

Washington's Farewell Address, despite its intrinsic brilliance, did not terminate the debate on the nature of a proper American approach to foreign policy. The sense of mission was too deeply entrenched. With the outbreak of revolution in Latin America after 1815, Henry Clay urged the immediate recognition of the new republics to further the moral influence of the New World. During the revolutions of 1848 American idealism seemed to burn with unusual brightness as Democratic orators urged the government to underwrite the cause of liberty in Europe, a cause which rapidly disintegrated under the superior force of reaction. Lewis Cass of Michigan looked forward to a better day. "I trust the time will come," he told a New York audience, "when not a hostile drum shall roll, and not a hostile cannon be fired throughout the world, if we say, 'Your cause is not a just or right one'." This deepening sense of mission drove President William McKinley toward the annexation of the Philippines in 1898. During his October speaking tour of the Midwest he admonished his listeners in Columbus, Ohio: "We know what our country is now in its territory, but we do not know what it may be in the near future. But whatever it is, whatever obligation shall justly come from this humanity, we must take up and perform, and as free, strong, brave people, accept the trust which civilization puts upon us." McKinley refused to dwell on the burdens of empire at all.

Actually the United States throughout the 19th century was preoccupied with the succession of finite goals which served the national interest. Such idealists as Jefferson, Madison, Clay, and Lincoln were less concerned with the American involvement in revolutions abroad than in the creation of a society in America that was worthy of emulation. For them the United States was no more than an example-setter for the world. Clay never advocated military aid to underwrite the American interest in Latin American independence. Without exception, those who prior to McKinley demanded American involvements abroad in behalf of liberty and humanity were not in positions of power or responsibility. Never did they succeed in framing policies that might secure their interests in liberty. In fact, they never tried. McKinley, in defending the Spanish American War and the acquisition of the Philippines in humanitarian terms, was the first president to affix American foreign policy to sentiment rather than to clearly-defined national interests.

With good reason twentieth-century Americans have identified the American mission with Woodrow Wilson's perceptions of a new order in international affairs. In many respects Wilson's idealism was a continuation of the older dream. At the core of his thought was the conviction that the nation's political, social, and moral uniqueness had assigned it a transcendent mission to serve humanity. America had been born, he said, that men might be free. But in contemplating the damage which autocratic governments had allegedly done to civilization, Wilson after 1914 gave new meaning to the American mission. Earlier expressions

of idealism had focused only on the good that freedom might bring to others. Under Wilson that idealism would serve as the foundation of a new order which would guarantee the peace and, with it, the highest interests of the United States.

Wilson's vision emerged with increasing force as the war progressed. If war comprised irrational resorts to violence, perpetrated by wicked, undemocratic governments, then perennial peace required no more than a universal triumph of democracy and self-determination. "Only free peoples," he said, "can hold their purposes and their honor steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any interests of their own." Wilson's attitude toward Germany reaffirmed his strong identification of American and world requirements with the broadening of democracy's base. German absolutism was the enemy. Colonel Edward House, Wilson's trusted adviser, reported on his conversation with the German Kaiser in 1916: "If victory is theirs, the war lords will reign supreme and democratic governments will be imperilled throughout the world." In his War Message of April, 1917, Wilson described Germany as selfish and autocratic, a menace to peace and freedom. Responding to the threat of autocracy, Wilson committed the United States to fight for democracy and "for a universal dominion of right . . . as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free." Beyond victory lay the hope of a new era dedicated to self-determination and international order.

That illusion of peace which characterized the mood of the twenties receded rapidly before the onslaught of the depression and the aggressions of the thirties. What quickly resurrected the liberal democratic worldview in the face of a collapsing international order was the realization that the aggressors again were autocratic. Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese militarists had drenched their countries with an aggressive nationalism which now threatened the peace. Noting the ineffectiveness of his previous diplomatic efforts, Franklin D. Roosevelt warned Congress on January 3, 1936, that it was idle to appeal to peoples "dominated by the twin spirits of autocracy and aggression." Such populations, lacking democratic institutions, "follow blindly and fervently the lead of those who seek autocratic power." Shortly after the passage of the Lend-Lease Act in early 1941, Roosevelt addressed the press, "We know that although Prussian autocracy was bad enough in the first war, Nazism is far worse in this." The issue before the world was clear. "Today," he reminded the nation on May 27, "the whole world is divided between human slavery and human freedom. . . ." It was not strange that Roosevelt that year framed the nation's purpose in terms of his Four Freedoms—none of which had much relationship to reality. Roosevelt's dreams, like those influence, and the triumph of liberal democracy the world over.

World War II carried the United States into the world arena as the world's dominant economic and military power. The failure of the Soviet Union to accept America's vision of the postwar world, anchored to the principle of self-determination as embodied in the Atlantic Charter of August, 1941, perpetuated the country's global involvements. For it became clear by 1947 that the war had shattered what remained of the older international order based fundamentally on an internally balanced Europe. In large measure the Cold War policies from the Truman Doctrine to the formation of NATO two years later attempted to stabilize Europe by countering Russia's dominant position on the continent. Some regarded the outflow of effort humanitarian in purpose. For them, the Marshall Plan for Europe became the most generous act ever undertaken by any nation. Later foreign aid, Food for Peace, and programs for famine relief reflected the conviction that the world's richest nation should help the less fortunate. Peace Corps volunteers spread across the underdeveloped world of the sixties, bringing with them American ideals and democratic procedures much as did earlier generations of American missionaries. The nation had learned its lesson; it would not again avoid

responsibilities commensurate with its wealth and power. What the whole endeavor outside Europe achieved in economic growth and political stability remained limited, for the forces of cultural resistance are often insurmountable.

This limited (if sometimes idealistic) assertion of national purpose did not command the country's postwar outlook. Despite the realism and early success of containment, American ambition again became that of transforming the world. What renewed the American mission was both the knowledge that the U.S.S.R. was autocratic and the assumption that it was bent on world conquest. W. Averell Harriman predicted at the war's end that the United States might be forced to confront another ideological threat as "vigorous and dangerous as Fascism or Nazism." In announcing the Truman Doctrine in March, 1947, the President reminded Americans that the task of helping others "is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct and indirect aggression, undermines the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States." Later in May President Truman observed: "There isn't any difference in totalitarian states. I don't care what you call them, Nazi, Communist or Fascist. . . . "

America's worldview thus demanded opposition to communism and Communist power as dangers to international stability and democratic values. Containment became the agency, not merely for limiting the area of Soviet influence, but for creating a stable world order. By stopping Communist expansion in both Europe and Asia, the United States might ultimately eliminate the destabilizing threat of Communist power and create the peaceful world environment in which its values might triumph. President John F. Kennedy voiced this intent in his inaugural address of January, 1961: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

Somehow the boundless utterances of two long generations seemed lost in a world of declining democracy, continuing conflict, and contracting American influence. Long ago Washington's admonitions made clear why American democratic idealism, except as it might perfect the nation's domestic order, would have little efficacy in foreign relations. That idealism eventually rationalized a wide spectrum of American policies: involvement in all the nation's 20th century wars as well as the whole course of containment. Yet where those decisions led to positive and measurable gains, they did so because they respected the concrete national interest. The idealism of Wilson and Roosevelt was less sig-

American Peace Corps volunteer working with farmers in an Indian village.

nificant in this nation's entry into two world wars than the realization that Britain, British naval supremacy, and the European balance of power were vital to American security. American power, not American virtue, compelled Western Civilization to rely on the United States for its survival. To Europeans and thoughtful Americans alike the United States was rich, often selfish, and as much concerned with its own narrow interests as nations generally. The Marshall Plan was generous; it was also prudent. It rebuilt Europe's wealth and political stability when the loss of either would have isolated the United States. Still it remains difficult for some Americans to understand that the norm for nations, in contrast to individuals, is not generosity but a wise self-interest.

The Economic Dimension

For 200 years the United States has used its considerable economic power to serve the interests of prosperity at home and security abroad. To establish the foundations of a permanent and growing commercial empire, the Second Continental Congress, in September, 1776, adopted a plan to obtain French and European trade without the necessity of a military alliance. In exchange for American commerce, France could keep any colonies in the West Indies taken from Britain in war, while it granted to the United States all territory on the North American continent as well as nearby islands formerly belonging to Great Britain. American leaders soon discovered that the commerce of the United States, beneficial as it might be to others, had little coercive power. Not only did the promise of trade fail to secure French aid without further guarantees, it did not enable American diplomats to negotiate satisfactory trade agreements with the European powers until well into the 19th century. Meanwhile the United States made the decision to expand its prosperity through production as well as trade by adopting a system of protective tariffs.

It was not until after the Civil War that Americans in large numbers recognized a direct relationship between their economic well-being and the existence of a free marketplace in the world. From 1865 to 1895 farmers suffered from overproduction and declining prices. Expanding American industry periodically outran demand, creating major depressions in the seventies and nineties. These depressions not only promoted consolidation by killing off the weaker companies, but also demonstrated the need for expanded markets or massive adjustments in the domestic economy. At least in part the imperial outburst of the 1890's anticipated market expansion through an enlarged navy and merchant marine, the acquisition of bases and coaling stations such as Hawaii and Samoa, and a new system of reciprocal tariffs. Much of the commercial expansionism discounted the need for additional territory. As Secretary of State Frederick Frelinghuysen explained in December, 1884, a reciprocity treaty with Cuba would bring that island into the commercial orbit of the United States and thus confer "all the benefits which would result from annexation. . . ." The territorial acquisitions of the McKinley years, added to the Open Door in China, established the foundations of an American commercial predominance in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

After 1900 American industrialism moved into a composition. William Howard Taft's "dollar diplomacy" placed the power of marines and diplomacy behind the search for additional markets and investment opportunities in China and the Caribbean. But perhaps no one revealed more ambition than Woodrow Wilson to employ state power to gain control of the world's commerce. An unpublished paper of 1907 revealed his private convictions: "Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed against him must be battered down. Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state. . . . Colonies must be obtained or planted, in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused."

Republican policy in the twenties attempted to strengthen the American position in the world community, not through military or political commitments, but through economic cooperation and expansion. If United States tariff policy remained narrowly nationalistic, the United States government encouraged the outflow of capital to support much of the world's economy. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, after 1921, expanded the overseas operations of his department by dispatching commercial agents abroad to discover new outlets for trade and investment. Through pamphlets, speeches, articles, and press releases the Department of Commerce advertised opportunities for American economic expansion to serve national as well as individual purposes.

The use of economic power to strengthen both the domestic economy and international stability became even more pronounced during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency. Cordell Hull's reciprocal trade agreements, in practice, sought special commercial privileges from nations made vulnerable by economic weakness. Hull hoped, through economic pressures, to compel Britain, Germany, and Japan to alter their economic policies. By 1939 it was clear that the two aggressor states threatened the freedom of the seas and the free flow of commerce. When in July, 1941, the Roosevelt administration turned the full economic power of the United States against Japan in the form of a total embargo, it succeeded only in driving the increasingly desperate Japanese into an attack on Pearl Harbor. Finally in the midst of the war Roosevelt and Hull succeeded in breaking the British system of imperial preferences.

America's economic stakes in the postwar world were higher than ever. With its unprecedented productive capacity, the United States required an expanding commerce to assure its future prosperity. "We cannot go through another 10 years like the 10 years at the end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties," Acheson told a Congressional committee in 1944, "without having the most far-reaching consequences upon our economic and social system.... So far as I know, no group which has studied the problem ... has ever believed that our domestic markets could absorb our entire production under our present system." William Clayton, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, warned Congress in March, 1945, that the United States was exporting goods valued at over $14 billion a year. Unless the United States exported three times as much as it exported before the war, it would not keep its industry running at capacity. American postwar economic planning, ratified in large measure at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, anticipated international cooperation in trade and monetary policy that would expand international commerce and investment to levels unprecedented in modern history. Clearly the United States had the power and the prestige to fashion international trade. Whether it could use that power to effect diplomatic and political change, especially in the Soviet sphere, was less certain.

That Russia might become subject to American economic power seemed clear in January, 1945, when the Soviet government handed Ambassador Harriman a request for long-term credits totaling $6 billion. The arrangement proposed terms favorable to Russia, but, the Kremlin argued, its orders for railroad and industrial equipment would be placed in the United States. For Harriman and Clayton United States economic power was so awesome that it would give the United States leverage even in Eastern Europe. Clayton favored delay in granting credits because, he argued, an American loan remained "the only concrete bargaining lever for use in connection with the many other political and economic problems which will arise between our two countries." Thereafter the subject receded; it was avoided at Yalta in February and at Potsdam in August. Early in March, 1946, the State Department announced that it had lost the Russian request. Within weeks the loan became a dead issue. Truman had no desire to confront Congress on the matter; the Kremlin would not compromise any of its political interests in Slavic Europe to obtain a loan.

What disturbed United States officials throughout the spring of 1945 was not only the burgeoning pattern of Soviet political control over Eastern Europe but also the Kremlin's program to divert the trade of the Slavic countries eastward. In May, Elbridge Durbrow of the State Department's Division of Eastern European Affairs warned that Soviet trade agreements with the Eastern European regimes might "create an almost airtight economic blackout in the entire area east of the Stettin-Trieste line." Washington fought back by demanding that all international waterways, including the 1800-mile Danube, be subject to the principle of free navigation. In the summer of 1948, after two years of agitation, a Danube conference accepted the Soviet principle of riparian control. This failure of American purpose in Eastern Europe demonstrated again that economic power fails, as it did with the Japanese, when it is used to obtain, without any concessions, objectives which others regard unacceptable for any settlement.

United States economic power was most effective in the rebuilding of Western Europe. Here, indeed, the results were spectacular. Throughout the early postwar years Washington had groped for some practical role that would reflect its interest in European stability. After March, 1947, the response came quickly in the form of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. With the latter program the United States embarked on a costly, but promising, association with Western Europe. *The Economist* (London), in January, 1949, termed the offer of Marshall aid one of "the greatest creative acts of history." So critical was Europe's economic crisis, so pervading the impact of American aid, that Western Europe followed the American lead unquestioningly. By mid-century the nations of Western Europe had recovered their prewar productive levels and soared on to new heights of growth and prosperity. If much of this cooperative effort stimulated the American economy as well, the billions which the United States expended were aimed less at the quest for special privilege than the establishment of a decent level of international order.

Foreign aid for the underdeveloped world experienced far less success. The conditions for the effective assimilation of foreign credit, equipment, and technical personnel were often nonexistent. The program attempted as well to implement the military and political objectives of the United States. President Kennedy once boasted, in a statement that could withstand little scrutiny, that aid had kept dozens of nations out of Communist hands. Beyond that, foreign aid sought to guarantee American access to raw materials and bind the recipients to capitalist economic practices. The United States, through its influence in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, pursued policies that would preserve the desired economic relationships. By withholding funds the international monetary agencies could encourage recipient nations to change unwanted policies. As one British economist explained, "The International Monetary Fund fulfills the role of the colonial administration of enforcing the rules of the game."

Postwar United States economic expansion has encompassed as well the huge American-based multinational corporations which account for almost a third of free-world industrial production outside the United States. Long before 1970 the sales of American-controlled international corporations exceeded the total national output of England and France. Backed by sophisticated technology, these giants wield immeasurable economic influence in many countries. Companies such as Proctor and Gamble, General Motors, Ford, IBM, Chrysler, and Kodak employ a third of their work force outside the United States. General Motors has operations in seventeen countries. Some have suggested that the multinationals, by creating a worldwide network of mutual economic interests, serve the cause of world peace. That the large corporations have contributed to United States and world prosperity is true; beyond that their role and influence in the world can be exaggerated.

Under conditions of increasing interdependence, harsh disparities in wealth and technology, burgeoning shortages in basic commodities, worldwide inflation, and general economic decline, the economic dimension of foreign policy has become increasingly complex and unpromising. Issues of food, markets, land use, hunger, reform can impinge on the lives of more people than did the Cold War. Indeed, such issues threaten to tear apart the entire postwar order. Still the resolution of such problems lies outside the possibilities of traditional foreign policy. Oil became a special problem for both the Western and the underdeveloped world when the producing countries, largely Arab, discovered amid the October War of 1973 that the world demand for oil would permit higher prices and higher profits. The five-fold price increase which followed produced a $40 billion payments deficit among the industrial nations, a $20 billion yearly deficit among the nations of the developing world. At the Washington Energy Conference of early 1974 the Western consumer nations agreed on collective action; in November they formed the International Energy Agency. But unwilling to threaten economic reprisal, they have been powerless to act.

As early as 1973 it was clear that Western Europe's economic policies threatened United States trade. In April of that year Secretary of State Henry Kissinger demanded the elimination of some preferential trade arrangements within the Common Market President Richard Nixon warned Europe in May that it could not expect protection from the United States while it raised regional tariff barriers against American exports. Whether the threat would prove effective was doubtful. For a

highly-developed country such as the United States, national economic power remains a potent weapon in foreign policy. But beyond creating conditions for its own expansion and that of other economies, its effects are highly limited. Only under unique circumstances will economic pressures alter the political, military, or even the economic policies of other countries. Capitulation to such threats is simply too ignominious to be acceptable as national policy.

A Power in the World

Military power and its proper use have always been subject to controversy. For the resort to force raises two inescapable questions: Is the resulting death and destruction required by clearly-perceived national interests that cannot be resolved better and more permanently through peaceful procedures? Second, will the power, if used, be effective at a reasonable level of employment? So elusive are the conditions for using power morally and effectually that the United States has fought only one war in its history—World War II—that did not spark domestic controversy from its inception. Even in 1941 it required the traumatic Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to unify the nation and, for the moment, silence the bitter debate then raging over the proper course of American policy.

Despite the powerful minority opposition to every foreign war of the 19th century, the United States consistently achieved what appeared to serve its interests abroad both quickly and cheaply. The Republic freed the Mississippi Valley of British and Spanish intrigue, and the Mediterranean of its piratical attacks on American seamen; it relieved the French of Louisiana, the Spaniards of Florida, the British of Oregon, and the Russians of Alaska. It drove the Mexicans out of Texas, New Mexico, and California. Thereafter it deprived Spain of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Despite the Civil War's heavy physical cost, few Americans in 1900 would have regarded the price of reforging the Union excessive. No nation of modern times had achieved its purposes more consistently, and at less cost to its people.

Such triumphs of war and diplomacy were not accidental. The quality of American power, when contrasted to the actual goals which the nation pursued, had always placed the United States in a commanding position, diplomatically and militarily. In its wars after 1815 the nation faced opponents no more powerful than Mexico and Spain. Moreover, all the action that mattered transpired in the Western Hemisphere where the United States enjoyed the total strategic advantage over any competitor. Then in its relations with the continental powers of Europe the United

The U.N. General Assembly in session at its headquarters in New York.

States had the protection of the Atlantic Ocean, the British navy, and the European balance of power which alone would have prevented any nation from successfully altering the order of power in the New World. Finally, in every confrontation before 1900 the United States pursued only tangible and precise objectives which lent themselves to the successful employment of limited power and diplomacy. Never were national objectives political in nature.

Long before 1914 American power, despite its increasing magnitude, had lost its earlier capacity to reap easy, permanent gains for the nation. For none of the four success factors survived the 19th century. First, the external competitors of the United States after 1900 were modern Germany, Japan, and Russia, three of the greatest wielders of power in modern times. Against such nations any success would come hard and remain elusive. Second, this country's major conflicts of the present century would transpire in Europe and Asia where other nations, not the United States, enjoyed the strategic advantage. Third, the United States was no longer fully protected by great oceans, the British navy, or the European balance of power. Indeed, in the 20th century Britain's

decline would compel this country to carry the full burden of its foreign and defense policies. Finally, the United States, having entered the present century as a satiated, and thus a *status quo* power, pursued, in neither war nor peace, precise or limited goals. Rather it attached its great power to the pursuit of abstractions such as peaceful change and self-determination of peoples. What power, what wars, and what policies could achieve such goals have never been demonstrated.

Despite its remarkable contribution to Allied victory in the Great War, the United States entered the postwar era convinced that the Versailles Treaty, reinforced by additional efforts to institutionalize the peace—such as the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact—had eliminated force from international affairs. Unfortunately the peace of the twenties was no demonstration of either a general acceptance of the Versailles settlement or even the universal rejection of force. What sustained the assumption that all wars had been fought, all issues resolved, was the preponderance of Western power which permitted the spokesmen of the great democracies —Britain, France, and the United States—to manage the game of international politics so effortlessly that they were quite unconscious of the role which power played in their success. Peace rested primarily on the temporary weakness of those countries—Germany, Japan, and Russia—whose governments had already made clear their rejection of the Versailles Treaty. Any collapse of the Western monopoly of power would witness the almost immediate return of force to international life.

That decade of aggression and approaching war which separated the Manchurian crisis of 1931 from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was one of lost opportunities and a gradual retreat for the democracies. Yet so convinced were the Western powers that they could, by concession, halt aggression short of war and keep its effects limited, that they could not respond with efforts at genuine diplomacy or threats of force. When finally the German invasion of Poland and the Pearl Harbor attack unleashed a global conflict, the United States renewed its commitment to power, ultimately generating and employing more destructive force in its war against the Axis than had any nation in history. Even then the effort was flawed, for in eliminating German and Japanese power, the United States ignored the old adage that the European balance would not survive the victory of either Germany or Russia over the other. The United States, focusing on the immediate military goal of destroying the enemy, succeeded in demolishing totally the world that it sought, a world with the territorial and political arrangements of the Versailles Treaty restored.

Thus from the destruction of war two superpowers emerged to command Europe's destiny. Even a generation later the United States and the U.S.S.R. remained the dominant factors in Europe's military and political life. For Washington no less than for Western Europe, the evident collapse of the traditional balance of power demanded some American military response to discourage Russian advances beyond the Slavic regions, then under Kremlin control. Hopefully successful containment would in time restore all Europe to its pre-Hitler political and territorial condition. This reliance on American power was the price that Western Europe paid to gain some security in the face of Russian preponderance. Through a quarter century the two superpowers faced each other across Europe in the most massive and costly peacetime confrontation in history, each determined to free the continent of the postwar encroachments of the other.

This unprecedented peacetime emphasis on power to safeguard Europe and much of the world elevated defense to a major factor in American life. The nation's military budget jumped from $500 million in 1939 to some $80 billion in the 1970's. The first quarter century of containment cost the nation $1.5 trillion. Either directly or indirectly, the Department of Defense employed approximately ten percent of the country's labor force and purchased 36 percent of its entire output of durable industrial goods. Eventually the United States, as it globalized its defense structure with the fall of Nationalist China in 1949, the outbreak of the Korean War, and the collapse of the French position in Indochina, collected 48 allies and stationed 1.5 million troops in 119 countries. Yet the purpose of all that effort and expenditure remained unclear. Was it to repel further Soviet aggression or to re-establish the lost world of Versailles?

President Gerald Ford and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev sign the joint communique at Vladivostok affirming the intention to conclude a new agreement limiting strategic offensive arms and delivery systems.

Short of a general war, a war rendered unthinkable by the prospects of nuclear annihilation, the United States, whatever its power, could not reforge the conditions of its earlier security. Modern weapons possess astonishing powers of destruction; yet short of actual employment they have surprisingly limited powers of coercion. Even nuclear weapons, aside from discouraging a direct attack on this country, can serve no coercive purpose commensurate with their cost. Military preparedness might deter aggression, for aggression can easily trigger a war; it cannot readily undo change once stabilized by written or implied acceptance. Thus the United States without difficulty or risk could limit Soviet expansion by reinforcing the military and political divisions of Europe. No level of preparedness could eliminate Russian power or even Russian ideology from European politics. Nor could it dismantle the Iron Curtain without war. For the United States could never establish an interest in Eastern Europe substantial enough to lend credibility to any threat of force.

Despite a decade of warning that its strength would be ineffective in a revolutionary Indochina, the United States, after 1961, drifted into a long, exhausting, and divisive struggle to determine that country's political future. The massive miscarriage of policy in Southeast Asia resulted largely from more than two decades of misjudgment regarding the magnitude of American interest and power in that region of the world. Most Americans had steeled themselves against the final debacle of April, 1975, and supported overwhelmingly the congressional majorities who rejected the Ford administration's final, dramatic appeals for additional military aid. Reluctantly they accepted, on the moral principle of proportion, Clausewitz's dictum that when the pursuit of victory becomes destructive of ends, a nation might better accept military failure. "We must. . .familiarize ourselves," wrote Clausewitz, "with the thought of an honorable defeat." For him losing was a function of winning—winning in the sense that continued military effort would undermine rather than satisfy the nation's highest interests.

For that minority who accepted at face value the ubiquitous predictions of global disaster, the collapse of American policy in Vietnam emerged as another example of the misuse of American power. This propensity to place the nation's peace and security on the altar of power flowed from two historic assumptions. The first was the conviction that power serves the cause of peace far better than does diplomacy. To achieve peace with an aggressor state, negotiations require some acceptance of change dictated by force. But if the Vietnamese enemy—no less than the Kaiser, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and the Japanese war lords—was insatiable (so defined by the notion of falling dominoes), negotiations would merely encourage further aggression. Thus not compromise but power attached to inflexible purpose seemed the best guarantee of a stable and peaceful international order in Asia and elsewhere.

Indeed, many publicists and politicians argued that the effort to avoid further war comprised the greatest danger to peace. One writer condemned the effort in these words: "It evades the grim lesson of very recent history—that appeasement and retreat, far from ending danger are the guarantees of more terrible dangers to come.... The real question is whether war is best avoided by softness, jitters, submission to blackmail, piecemeal surrenders—or by a principled, self-respecting firmness." Unfortunately such arguments created a false dichotomy, for compromise is neither softness nor inflexibility, but a concession based on a *quid pro quo* that promises the achievement of some essential goal without the price of continuing war.

Secondly, many Americans insist that power of the magnitude possessed by the United States, if properly employed, should be effective in preventing war with a minimum of risk. As Admiral William F. Halsey once advised, "Touch a thistle timidly and it pricks you; grasp it boldly and its spines crumble." American power, then, would serve the world's interest in peace most effectively, not in its capacity to annihilate enemies, but in its alleged capacity to prevent the unwanted use of force. For John Foster Dulles, following the Korean truce of July, 1953, the threat of massive retaliation would eliminate the necessity of fighting additional minor wars. As late as the Kennedy years national spokesmen insisted that America's capacity to respond to any aggression with superior force, up to and including nuclear war, had eliminated the danger of war in Southeast Asia.

It was left for Ho Chi Minh to expose the hollowness of nuclear deterrent in Asia and compel the Johnson administration, if it would sustain the country's global posture, to establish the credibility of America's conventional power. To achieve this purpose the Johnson administration rejected every argument for compromise in Vietnam. What mattered after 1965 was not the rightness of the American cause but the reassertion of an image which would convince the world that the United States remained "the mightiest power on earth."

Challenged openly by Hanoi, American policy of maintaining world stability without fighting additional wars required the constant reaffirmation of the national will. "To leave Vietnam to its fate," ran President Johnson's warning of February, 1965, "would shake the confidence ...in the value of the American commitment, the value of America's word. The result would be increased unrest and instability, and ever wider war." Similarly Secretary of State Dean Rusk assured Senators in January, 1966, "The integrity of our commitments is absolutely essential to the preservation of peace right around the globe.... We know from painful experience that aggression feeds on aggression." At stake in Cambodia during May, 1970, was again the credibility of United States power to oppose aggression everywhere. "It is not," said President Nixon, "our power but our will and character that is being tested tonight." As late as March, 1975, Secretary Kissinger warned his countrymen that the doctrine of "selective reliability" would undermine American purpose and endanger the peace everywhere.

Ultimately this dual effort to terrify the enemy and sustain American support for established policies failed. Whatever the intellectual burden it carried for global stability, victory in Vietnam proved elusive. Fighting jungle opponents, often unrecognizable, striking everywhere and nowhere, limited the effectiveness of American ground action, eliminated the possibility of exerting constant pressure along distinctive battle lines, and reduced the war to simple search and destroy operations. The absence of good strategic targets minimized the effectiveness of what became the most massive air war in history. No reasonable level of destructiveness could overcome the enemy's superior interests in victory.

What Vietnam demonstrated was the fact that a country can perform effectively with military power only within the range of its clearly-perceived interests. For a full decade United States officials used arguments in profusion to convert Indochina into a vital American concern; the effort failed. Ho Chi Minh was no Hitler; Saigon was no London, Paris, or Berlin. The danger, never demonstrable, took its form from words which some believed and others rejected. What trapped the United States in Vietnam was the assumption that the basic pressures for change which existed there were global rather than indigenous. Despite the perennial references to world aggression, Washington officials could never convince either the North Vietnamese or much of the American populace that the country's security interests were universal.

The power to destroy is not the power to control. The United States, through the logic of history and geography, has written into the record its vital concern for what happens in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Where its interests are primary the country faces no direct challenge. There the United States military structure has succeeded in deterring with the Atlantic Ocean rather than with a body of precise political conditions in Europe, which after 1890 were subject to enormous change, created the foundations for twentieth-century American isolationism.

After 1900 a small group of American intellectuals warned the nation that its isolationism was assuming a powerful and potentially destructive Asia-first orientation. Even as the administration of William Howard Taft, after 1909, extended United States military, political, and economic commitments in the Caribbean and the western Pacific, it refused to formulate a policy for Europe at all. With Europe already headed for the disastrous suicidal struggle of 1914, such writers as Brooks and Henry Adams, Herbert Croly, and former President Theodore Roosevelt reminded the nation that a German victory in Europe would destroy the balance of power. American security, they agreed, rendered that prospect intolerable. "If England should fail to preserve the European balance of power," warned Roosevelt, "the United States would be forced to step in to reestablish it, no matter against what countries our efforts would have to be directed." Croly joined Roosevelt in arguing that the growing commitment to China at the expense of a policy toward Europe would ultimately demand a heavy price of the nation. Such advice was lost on the Taft administration.

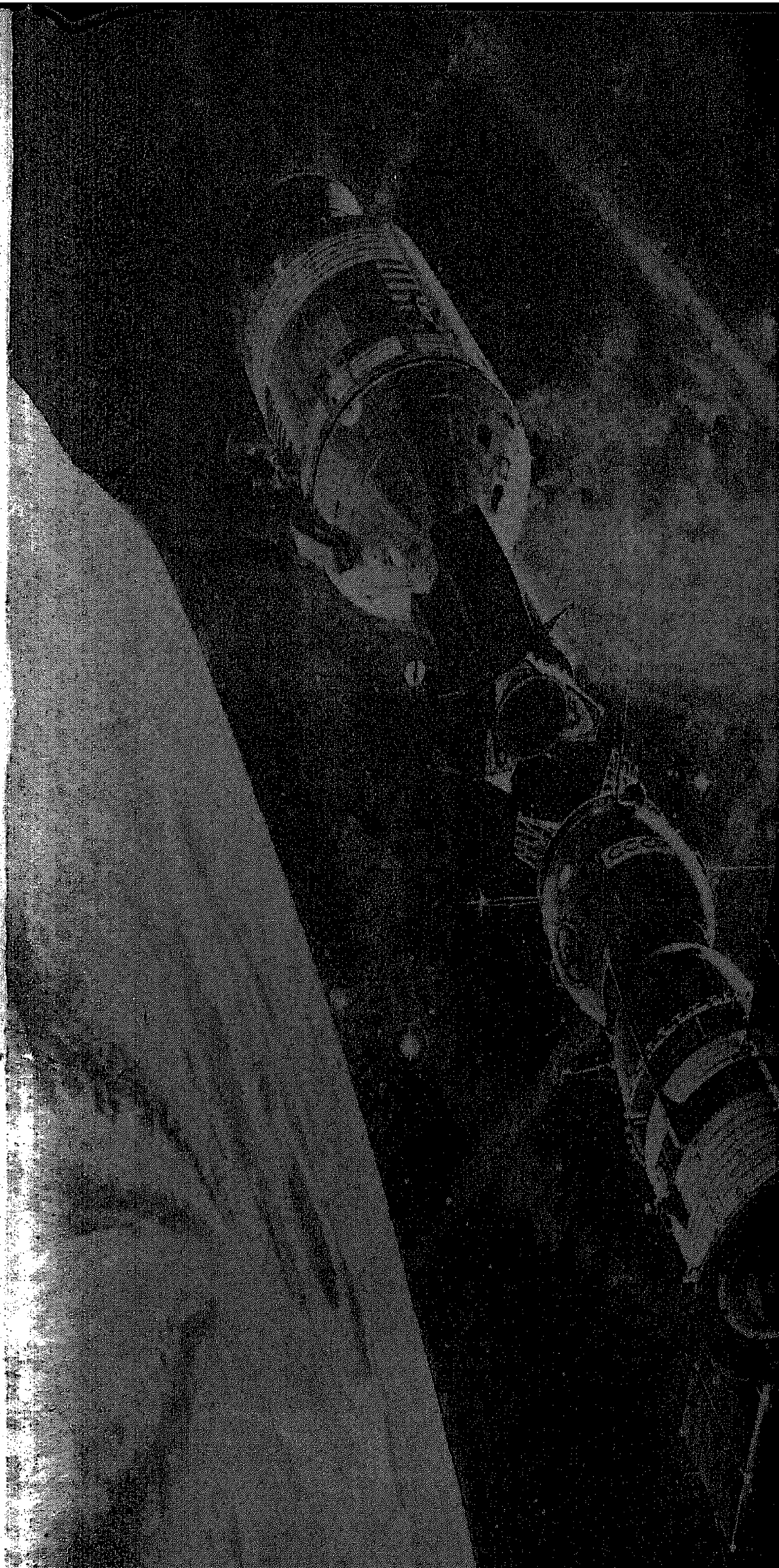
It required no more than the outbreak of war in Europe to demonstrate the extent to which American industrial and military power had become an essential factor in European and world affairs. Ultimately the American contribution to the Allied victory became total. That victory catapulted the United States to the center of world politics. At Versailles Woodrow Wilson became the first diplomatist in the nation's history to arbitrate the conflicts of Europe. Whatever the quality of the Versailles peace structure, its permanence required the support of those who created it. Still the United States, under the impact of the Great Debate over the League of Nations, withdrew its power from Europe under the assumption either that the victories in war had indeed bequeathed to the postwar world a new era of peace or that a future war need not involve the United States. Wilson's failure to sustain American neutrality as well as his failure at Versailles to create a new international order predicted at the outset that both assumptions were wrong.

Isolationism, in rejecting the importance of political and military events abroad, could scarcely form the basis for policies that would sustain the essentials of the Versailles settlement. But the internationalism of the interwar years was as oblivious to political reality as was isolationism. Whereas isolationism limited the nation's interests to the Western Hemisphere, internationalism assumed that American interests were universal—wherever mankind was oppressed or threatened by aggression. Isolationists preached that events outside the hemisphere were inconsequential; internationalists insisted not only that they mattered but also that the United States, in its role as a world leader, could not renounce its obligation to engage in politics of cooperation. In practice, however, the internationalists would control the world environment, not with the traditional devices of diplomacy or force, but by confronting aggressors with a combination of international law, signed agreements, and world opinion. Every program fostered by American internationalists throughout the twenties—membership in the League of Nations and the World Court, the resort to arbitration and conciliation, collective security, naval disarmament, or the outlawry of war—denied the need of any precise definition of either the ends or the means of national policy. Traditionally world politics had rested on the rights of the stronger; by the new morality they rested on the rights of those who possessed. This would-be utopia, like all those which become institutionalized, became the bulwark of the *status quo*.

This devotion to the Versailles structure eliminated diplomacy, and with it the United States, from the main currents of international life. After 1919 change to be legitimate had also to be peaceful. The new diplomacy contained no provision for acceptance of even minor shifts in the world's treaty structure unless underwritten by general agreement. The great democracies based their hopes for the future on the assumption that in a rational world, peace would always take precedence over ambition and war. But the Japanese demonstrated in Manchuria that the necessary harmony of interest in peace and peaceful change did not exist. Either the democracies would accept alterations in the *status quo* created by force or they would fight another major war to sustain inviolate the world they had designed at Versailles. In refusing to compromise its adherence to the treaty system, the United States embarked on a massive defiance of political and military reality. Rejected by Germany, Japan, and Russia, the Versailles order was doomed. Stalin managed only to complete the destruction which Hitler began. Between the isolationist restraints of the thirties and the total involvement which followed the United States, along with others, managed to destroy the Versailles order completely.

Still after 1945 that same adherence to the Versailles structure in Europe again divorced official American purpose from the country's far more limited requirements. For what characterized United States policy in the Cold War was not only a massive effort at international stabilization but also the refusal to recognize diplomatically the territorial and political changes wrought by Soviet victories in the war against Hitler. If, as successive administrations insisted, the ultimate purpose of containment was the creation of opportunities to negotiate from strength, the revisionist goals which the nation pursued ruled out all negotiation. What national interest this served was never clear. Perhaps nothing would have demonstrated so effectively the restricted choices confronting the nation as the outbreak of conventional war which involved the forces of the United States and the U.S.S.R. For military conflicts even in the seventies could be limited only by an unequivocal declaration for the continuance of the *status quo* as the object of the involvement. But if a nation at war, fighting under the immediate threat of nuclear escalation, faced the simple alternative of announcing the limits of its intentions or inviting a thermonuclear attack, then it was not unreasonable to suggest that it regard negotiable in time of peace what it would of necessity regard negotiable in time of war unless it preferred to invite a general destruction.

Western revisionism received its first challenge in West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. During 1970 Brandt signed treaties with Moscow and Warsaw which recognized the postwar frontiers of Central Europe. President Richard M. Nixon, following that precedent, moved American foreign policy for the first time in two generations from its traditional uncompromising, verbal devotion to self-determination toward a more accurate measure of interests and capabilities. Behind the shift was Nixon's recognition of declining American authority and his realization that the goal of liberation, which really was no expression of American intent, still served only the interest of the Cold War itself. For Nixon and Kissinger, in their pursuit of détente, peace hinged above all on the state of United States-Soviet relations. They sensed correctly that the concept of Cold War had become frayed, that Americans were tired of defending every corner of the globe. But perhaps the change came too late. For the world had already grown too complex, too economically interrelated, the underdeveloped world too demanding, allies too independent to be harnessed by superpower diplomacy. Amid the burgeoning changes of the sixties and seventies the two superpowers controlled less and less as major and minor states asserted their primary interests. Détente did not stop Hanoi; nor could it control events in Portugal, Thailand, or the Middle East. So far did the Vietnam war carry the United States from the main currents of international life that it now faces the ultimate challenge of keeping its policies relevant to the world's needs.



Artist Robert McCall's drawing of Apollo-Soyuz rendezvous in space. The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP) was part of the joint United States-Soviet Union agreement on cooperation in space, signed in 1972. The project was culminated in mid-1975 when the two ships successfully completed their mission in space.

Much of the post-Vietnam debate turned on the definition of a proper American world role. Some Americans such as Dean Rusk detect a mood of withdrawal from world affairs, reflected not only in the decision to leave Southeast Asia, but also in the growing demand to withdraw troops from NATO, the cuts in foreign aid, the restrictions on imports, and the general conviction that the nation's greatest problems are at home. President Ford warned the country against a return to isolationism. At Notre Dame University in March, 1975, he admonished Americans to support established commitments. "To do otherwise," he said, "would invite greater violence." Such fears of abandonment lead nowhere; the nation's citizens are beating no retreat to Fortress America. No less than their leaders they recognize this nation's economic stake in the world; they attribute, as do others, a quarter-century of general stability to the country's efforts abroad. They want their security and are willing to pay for it. But where do their interests lie?

One answer seems clear. They do not lie in the outsized requirements which the United States from time to time has sought to impose on a reluctant world. For in large measure the American experience has been a lesson in humility. The nation's long and costly effort to export its ideology, its culture, and its economic system was doomed from the outset, for every country responds to external pressures with traditions, interests, political and ideological preferences of its own. Unfortunately, Americans who surrendered to the passion for remaking the world removed themselves from all such rational conclusions. Their great illusion, Richard W. Van Alstyne has written, was "the assumption of an historical innocence too good to be true, the hereditary belief that, *because* the United States is not like other nations but, rather, exceeds them in virtue, all mankind are bound to accept its lead." Perhaps American economic power still could ease the burden of hunger, population, and energy; it could not do more. Aside from its victories in two world wars, which together destroyed the fabric of the former international order, the nation's excursions into armed conflict again made clear the country's limited power to change the direction of history or the character of nations.

Still the United States, existing in a world of highly independent states, remains rich, successful, relatively secure. Its established and historic interests in trade and security the country has sustained with sometimes astonishing success. It has been equal to the task of protecting the economic and political independence of Western Europe and Japan; it has maintained its access to the Middle East. Large areas of the globe remain congenial to this nation and its purposes. Indeed, the United States has never stood alone. Its fundamental interests in international trade and stability coincide with the preferences of most of the world's people. Much of what the nation requires for its well-being it receives automatically; it struggles for relatively little. Where the United States faces dogged and discouraging resistance to its will, other powers do also. No state can run away with the globe, for the forces of stability reside wherever countries pursue their own interests and display some willingness to defend their borders. Overwhelmingly nations accept the world on its terms and share it with considerable success, defending those interests that matter. In such a world the limits on national power and influence are severe; most triumphs and failures in foreign relations turn out to be irrelevant. But the restraints, great as they are, do not eliminate the opportunity for sound leadership, humbled by experience, to serve the nation's limited but essential interests abroad.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Richard W. Van Alstyne's *The Rising American Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1960, paperback) provides perceptive treatment of the United States as a crusading nation, seeking to extend its ideological preferences and commerce to the rest of the world.

Hans J. Morgenthau's *In Defense of the National Interest* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1951) develops similar themes, but focuses on the 20th century, especially the early Cold War years.

George F. Kennan's *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (University of Chicago Press, 1951, paperback) seeks to distinguish the real from the unreal in the American experience. **B/C/M/AUC**

Norman A. Graebner's *Ideas and Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press, 1964) presents ideas contained in the above volumes through essays and readings. **ND/B/C/AUC**

Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., *Ideas, Ideals, and American Diplomacy* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966, paperback) focuses on the American sense of mission—its evolution as well as its failure of purpose. **B**

Robert Endicott Osgood's *Ideals and Self-Interest in American Foreign Relations* (University of Chicago Press, 1953) deals specifically with the first four decades of the present century. **M/AUC**

Ernest Lefever's *Ethics and United States Foreign Policy* (Living Age Books, 1957, paperback) extends many of the same ideas into the era of Cold War.

Frederick Merk's *Manifest Destiny and Mission* (Random House, 1966, paperback) deals with the concepts of manifest destiny in the 19th century and their limitations. **ND/B/M**

Norman A. Graebner, ed., *Manifest Destiny* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968, paperback) is companion volume to Merk's book.

N. Gordon Levin's *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1968) offers a superb analysis of Woodrow Wilson's vision for a new world order. **ND/B/M**

Willard D. Range's *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order* (University of Georgia Press, 1959) presents an analysis of Roosevelt's ideology.

William Appleman Williams, ed., *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations* (John Wiley & Sons, 1972) surveys economic rather than the ideological foundations of American expansionism.

Lloyd C. Gardner, Walter F. LaFeber, and **Thomas J. McCormick's** *Creation of the American Empire* (Rand McNally & Company, 1973) also focuses on the same economic theme.

Walter F. LaFeber's *The New Empire* (Cornell University Press, 1966) traces American economic expansionism from the Civil War to the end of the 19th century.

William Appleman William's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Delta Books, 1962, paperback) carries the theme of "Open Door" diplomacy from the turn of the century into the Cold War.

Lloyd C. Gardner's *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1964) deals specifically with the economic ambitions abroad of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. **ND**

Harry Magdoff's *Age of Imperialism* (Monthly Review Press, 1969) analyzes the efforts of the United States to wield economic influence through its international aid and leading programs.

Paul Y. Hammond's *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the 20th Century* (Princeton University Press, 1961) surveys American military machine and military strategy. **ND**

William W. Kaufmann, ed., *Military Policy and National Security* (same publisher, 1956) contains essays by Gordon Craig, Roger Hilsman, Klaus Knorr, as well as the editor.

John Gaddis' *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (Columbia University Press, 1972, paperback) surveys the origins of the Cold War and the U.S. role in it. **ND/B/C/M**

Adam B. Ulam's *The Rivals: American and Russia Since World War II* (The Viking Press, 1971, paperback) surveys the Soviet-American rivalry and the American overcommitment. **B**

Lloyd C. Gardner's *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy 1941-1949* (Quadrangle Books, 1970, paperback) is highly critical of the leadership of the Truman years.

George F. Kennan's *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Atlantic-Little, **ND/B/C/M**

Brown, 1967) condemns the crusading quality in the Truman policies.

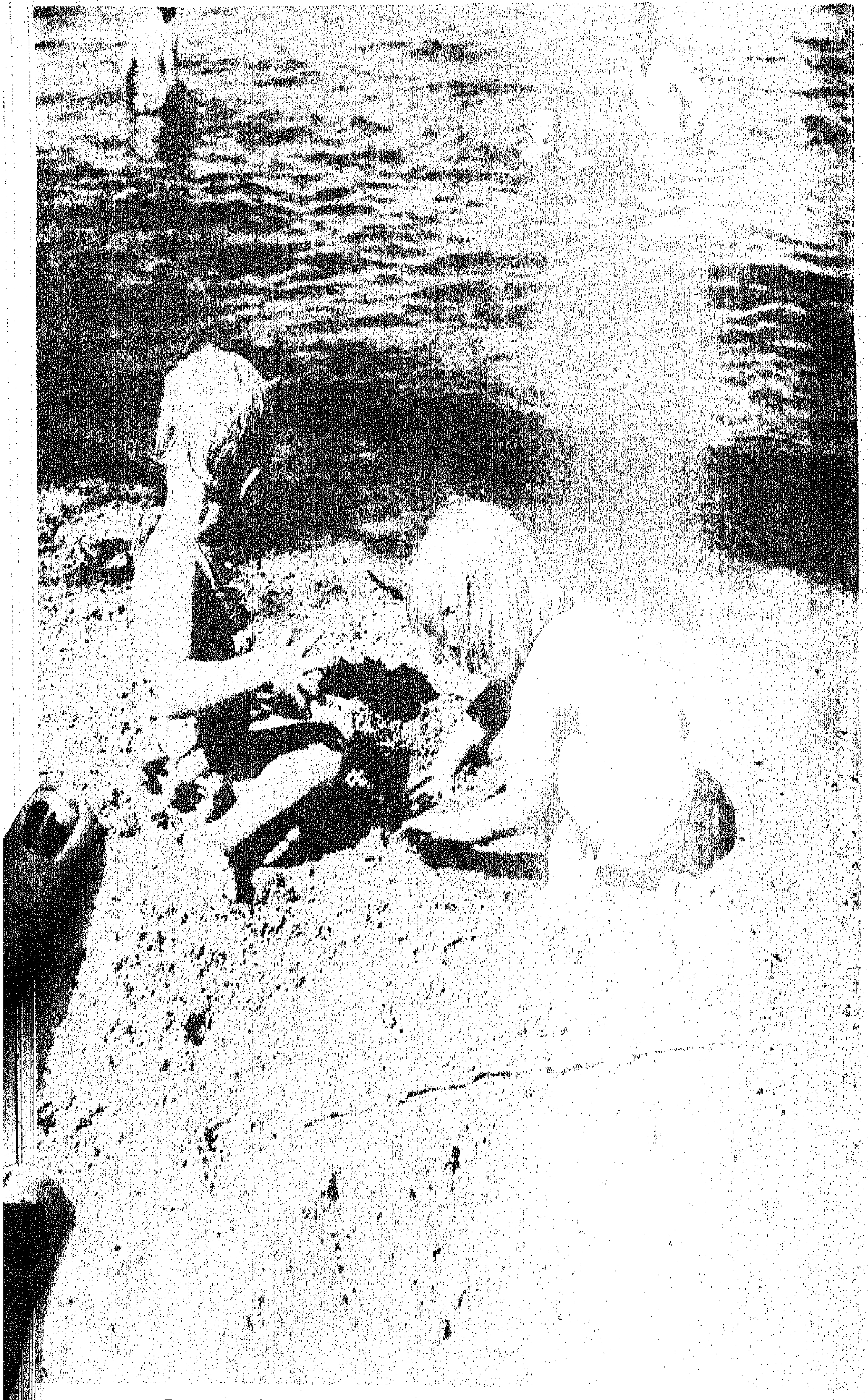
Townsend Hoopes' *The Limits of Intervention* (D. McKay Co., 1969) analyzes why the Vietnam War as a military engagement was flawed from the beginning. **ND**

GROWING UP IN AMERICA

by LAURENCE VEYSEY

One of the mistakes we often make as we look around us is to exaggerate the degree of change that has recently occurred in American society. Popular writers on such topics as youth, schooling, the family, religion, and community have sometimes been particularly bad offenders in this respect. They have shouted for our attention by striking the continual note of "crisis." During the past quarter-century we have been alerted to so many of these crises that we should be pardoned for reacting now with a certain skepticism. A broader historical perspective teaches us that the trends we are told to worry about are, at the very least, far more long-term than we commonly think, and that they may have as much to do with the experience of modern industrialization as with anything that is specifically American. The cautious historian, after all, merely wishes to counsel common sense. The several rapid zigzags which have occurred in the American social climate since the 1950's, especially centering on the youth scene, should have warned all of us against confusing momentary (if dramatic) symptoms with deeper, quieter tides of change that are less easily defined or blamed upon individuals.

An over-frantic pinpointing of our ills led observers first of all, in the late 1950's, to speak about adolescents as a "vanishing" breed. It then seemed as though the imitation of an adult style of achievement, both academically and in such realms as courtship, was spreading down into ever younger age-levels, making the experience of growing up in America one of an almost unnatural seriousness. Boys and girls who dutifully went steady at thirteen were what bothered commentators. On another level, it seemed the danger lay in the docile, unimaginative acceptance



For everyone there is just plain "growing up". Birthday parties, community sports, 4th-of-July picnics, graduation day, the first job . . . and just cavorting in the sea.

of a need to prepare oneself for a lifetime career inside a mammoth, faceless corporation. Middle-class children were still striving for success, but within a bland, monotonous landscape of muted expectations. The hunger for adventure had evaporated somewhere in the early twentieth-century, leaving only a pathetic craving for security, intensified by parents' memories of the great depression.

A few years later appraisals of the youth climate had become jarringly opposite. A strident counter-culture, at once pleasure-oriented and desperately apocalyptic, appeared to leave adults somewhere far behind. Openly flaunted rebellion produced extreme reaction, as with the housewife living near Kent State University who told a reporter after the tragic National Guard shootings that in her view all students who went barefoot ought to be shot. Youth were suddenly defined as so alien as to be scarcely human. More wonderingly, it was sometimes said that we now lived in a child-oriented society, where permissive upbringings had given the new generation an unlimited sense of freedom to forge its own eccentric customs. Rather than disappearing in a downward extension of adulthood, adolescence was aggressively taking America over. Teenagers had become anarchists, ruthlessly spurning all the slots the established institutions offered, meantime grouping themselves communally to carry on a never-ceasing celebration of unreason. It was predicted, whether joyfully or with alarm, that America would thereafter steadily be transformed by its youth into a permanently unrecognizable locale.

All at once, in the early 1970's, the youth scene shifted once again so rapidly as to make us disbelieve. The sobriety of the 1950's returned, and with it the expectation that training for existing occupations was the only viable course in life. The crisis suddenly no longer centered in the realm of fundamental values, but in that of practical ways and means. Far too many young people aspired to openings in professional specialties which, for reasons both demographic and political, were overcrowded. Less than at any time since the 1930's did the problem seem to lie with youth itself, no matter how they were defined; it was perceived rather as centering on the priorities for expenditure prevalent in the rest of the population. We were no longer a youth-centered society, but an aging one. And we were ignoring legitimate youthful ambitions. We did so, however, not as in the 1950's, by forcing newly arrived adults into soulless large-scale organizations, but by denying them the chance to enter the particular ones they had set their hearts on. The resulting discouragement—that you *couldn't*, for instance, become a professor—made no sense according to the standards of just a few years earlier, when professors were seen as part of an oppressive class.

These rapid shifts have left us breathless. Too seldom do we try to seek out the hidden continuities they may conceal. Such deeper reflection would remind us, for instance, that the hefty shadow of the bureaucratic organization falls across all these varying versions of the youth scene. In the 1950's it swallows up the young; in the 1960's, briefly, they reject it; in the 1970's they attempt to return to it, but not without misgivings. Always in actual fact the large-scale organization remains—whether in its public or its private corporate form, the seemingly unavoidable focal point for existence, first as a school child, then (whether one is working-class or middle-class, rich or poor, in the country or the city) as a wage-earning adult. Scarcely affected by all the noisy outcries against it of the past decade, it remains the arbiter of how one spends a forty-hour chunk of one's weekly waking existence, as well as the provider of sustenance for the whole of one's time on earth. On its educational face, it reaches down to give us the necessary preparation for its own future claims upon us, introducing tiny children to the functional requirements of a standardized, routinized impersonality of treatment at the age of five or six. On its military side, it reminds everyone who nowadays emerges into consciousness that we live in a world whose rhythms may at any time be roughly broken into or obliterated in an instant flash—even if we had better not let our minds become too depressed by this possible scenario. More ordinarily, when not frightening us either as unprepared first-graders or as potential nuclear consumers, large-scale organizations are the quiet shapers of a substantial share of our personalities. These far-reaching institutional structures, in most cases created at some time between the Civil War and World War II, have become our ever-present inheritance, the great common denominators of our potentialities as Americans or as inhabitants of the industrially developed portion of the world. Their role in affecting us is stronger than that of any of the other forces to be examined later—the family, religion, and so on. In a sense, everything else that can be said must be understood as relative to their existence. Alone, they might be enough to guarantee that American society does not suffer crucially from a lack of form or structure.

Their power to pattern a major share of our destiny, to hand us the roles considered necessary and proper for us to learn to play, makes a psychoanalytical perspective on youth as a distinct stage of life seem relatively superficial or beside the point. This Freudian view, popularized by Erik H. Erikson during the years when other commentators were veering more wildly in their diagnoses, has focused on the idea of a standard human "life-cycle" and of a so-called "identity crisis" as an expected feature within it. Paying little heed to exact cultural or sociological circumstance, neo-Freudians pictured youth as a time of almost mystical withdrawal from the real world, a moratorium during which

the person unconsciously gathers strength and gains a sense of direction for future engagement. The model here is actually that of the eventual leader or "great man"—Luther, Gandhi, the Harvard student. But even in this day and age, an identity crisis is apt to be a luxury affordable only by the upper-middle class. For the largest number of Americans, as for other peoples, adolescence is far more likely to be shaped by relatively mundane pressures and by dreams and fantasies that are earthier, less transcendental.

Such reflections remind us of how little we can say about growing up in America, beyond the elementary fact of the need to come to terms with big organizations, that will apply to nearly everybody. Indeed, when we pause to consider, we realize that the various trendier accounts of the youth scene in the last quarter-century have all been centered in the middle, perhaps the upper-middle class. The college-bound student, especially the one destined for an Ivy League university, was the model for the prematurely adult "vanishing" adolescent of the 1950's. Again, studies showed that radical drop-out youth of the 1960's came disproportionately from the upper end of the social spectrum. (Polls also revealed, incidentally, that only a small minority—around 9 to 12 percent—of the nation's college students identified themselves with the New Left in the peak year of 1969-70.) It is much the same kind of youth, in social terms, who create the picture we have of the anxious professional job-seeker in the 1970's. The proportion of American youth of college age who are enrolled in higher education has indeed risen from 14 percent in 1940 to 41 percent in 1971, if junior colleges are included. But this means that even today the majority of the age group does not share this kind of a growing up experience. (And since 1971, the college-bound proportion has actually declined slightly.) Clearly, when we focus on a single image of the American youth scene, at whatever moment in time, a great deal of unconscious selectivity enters into the process.

Our heightened awareness of the diversity within American society is of course itself largely a by-product of the 1960's. Twenty years ago we were much more confident of the generalizations we could make concerning the national character, and therefore of what it presumably meant to grow up here rather than somewhere else. These inclusive statements, when they rose above the level of ill-defined slogans about "freedom," often centered on the idea of affluence or material abundance. The United States enjoyed the highest living standard in the world. A baby opening its eyes in these surroundings was instantly bombarded by an array of historically novel creature comforts. All through childhood, exposure to material goods continued, fixing expectations for a lifetime of consumerism. The advanced technology that

Americans took for granted, and were able to pay for, was the basic force shaping the American character, argued David Potter in his widely read book *People of Plenty*. Much of the social criticism of the 1960's accepted these same facts, making them the basis for a witheringly negative evaluation.

But, beginning as early as 1960, the continued existence of poverty in America began to be startlingly publicized. The great disparity of average income between blacks and whites suddenly seemed an important reminder of conditions we had preferred to ignore in the 1950's, when America was so freely described as one vast success story. Black youths in high numbers were simply unable to get jobs of any kind, even in so-called good times, year after year. The survival of white rural poverty in such areas as Appalachia and among ethnic groups such as the Chicanos in migratory agricultural labor, also received great attention. And a subtler kind of literature began describing the plight of the ordinary blue-collar worker, better off than formerly, but unable to enjoy the security of the full range of amenities in life that were available to the middle class. Meanwhile, the distribution of wealth was not changing. In the comparative sense, the extremes were not diminishing, even if in absolute terms poverty engulfed a considerably smaller proportion of the population than in 1900.

In 1965 the most searing book of recent times about a version of youth experience in America, Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, was published. Forcefully it reminded us of the deprivation still possible on the streets of Harlem, and by implication in many other similar neighborhoods across the nation. More than sheer poverty was involved. A heritage of enforced negative self-evaluation, the product of race prejudice, had led to many consequences. Store-front religion offered solace and precious respectability to mothers whose families were collapsing around them. Boys, locked into a street culture that stressed an exaggerated masculinity and prowess, quickly became aware of the short-cuts to acquiring a status that parodied white middle-class success, though with more emphasis on immediate gratification of desires. Pimping and prostitution were the everyday facts of teenage life. Then upon this scene rose the growing specter of heroin. Whether drugs be interpreted as a means of desperate internal escape from an insecure and opportunity-less environment, or simply as the physiological consequences of a fad pushed along by cravings for peer group conformity, heroin introduced a new epoch on our urban streets that strangely blended torpor, stealing, and violence. The norms of one conspicuous youth group in America had become very close to suicidal.

Here was a setting, affecting large numbers of people, which clashed with all the generalizations being made about American society by the articulate fathers of the college-bound. In varying forms, its bleak story of exile was being duplicated on Indian reservations, in the forgotten black enclaves along the South Carolina coast, and in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. In still other city districts, working-class Italian-Americans or Irish eked out confined existences, living in much the same housing as their grandparents, taking pride in clannishness, whether family- or gang-oriented, and in a more voluntary way separating themselves from the American mainstream.

Was there in fact such a mainstream in this country, apart from the mosaic of all these particular pockets, neighborhoods, and ethnic groups? Some observers began doubting it, and the very concept of an American character thus fell under increasing question. We have become sensitive to so many glaring exceptions, and in an opposite direction made aware of how many of our values are apparently shared by other industrial peoples, that the self-contained, holistic formulas current in the 1950's, often taking off from the insights of Alexis de Tocqueville, have come to seem glib and far too simple. Or, as some would put the matter more bluntly, a national character was something we had to have—or to invent—in a period of Cold War. The idea formed part of our national arsenal of weapons. Perhaps with the ending of that war, it would no longer be necessary to hold onto it.

For their part, leftwing spokesmen, waxing temporarily in the 1960's, did not always clearly abandon the sense of a special American destiny. The concept of a unique American mission to mankind, inherited from the early Puritans in Massachusetts, still had enough resonance to make radical critics hesitate to abandon it. The national mission might not need scrapping, only redefinition. The "best" tendencies in it, toward equality and justice, could be appealed to—and the memories of Tom Paine and of the abolitionists invoked. To withdraw from faith in America, in this sense, was to lapse into a skepticism sadly ill-suited to any form of political engagement.

But could the unitary conception of an American character, in any version, survive in the wearier, more down-to-earth atmosphere of the 1970's? It appeared that a great watershed in our consciousness had been reached. Before this, supremacy and greatness were the obvious outcomes of American history. We were the shining beacon light. We embodied the strength of unlimited resources and the will to harness them productively. As the columns of so many of our public buildings reminded us, we liked to think of ourselves as the new Rome.

Now, on the other hand, we became aware that world history had not turned out in such a way as to support our self-perceptions. We suddenly discovered that in crucial cases our natural resources had limits on their future supply. To gain oil for our cars, we began to cultivate a strangely deferential relationship with Arab chieftains. We looked across our landscape and discovered how we had casually destroyed much of our own beauty. We lost a protracted war, and one which a large share of our people had defined as immoral in the first place. We discovered various embarrassing flaws of character imbedded in the personalities of our highest elected officials.

Illusions crumbled right and left. We began to realize that after all we were merely a country like any other. Our population was not huge, as compared with China, Russia, or India. Our territory was equalled by several other nations, and in an age of jet travel we were no longer so impressed by its supposedly vast extent. Even our living standard was no longer so uniquely high. Other peoples had cars, divided highways, and colored television. Modern buildings—and the views from the expressway—everywhere looked the same. If our forms and aspirations had been imitated, the result was a growing international uniformity, nonetheless. Comparatively, our industrial productivity statistics no longer looked good beside those of Germany and Japan. Russia had the same space technology and fearful weapons arsenal, and the same degree of hesitation about using it to blow up the world. In social services, America had always lagged behind certain other countries, and the growing demand from the taxpayers was that we worsen our showing. We were suddenly surprised to read that our nation stood far from the top in terms of the reduction of infant mortality.

Still more profoundly, we appeared to be nearing the upward limits in our growth. As technology in the form of easy contraceptives, greatly lowered the birth rate, the time began to loom when we would have a static society in actual terms of numbers, with vast consequences for everything from the educational system to real estate values. All these facts combined to give us a new sense of flatness as we viewed the world scene and our place in it. It is as if certain blinders had at long last been removed. The result was comforting to nobody of any political persuasion, save a few apocalyptic decentralists.

Of course this new mood might prove to be a transient one. Although some of the symptoms that produced it reflect long-term trends rather than the immediate political and diplomatic climate, it is well to be cautious in assuming that we are incapable of further dizzying zigzags.

However, the present moment is one which allows us to explore the subject of the American character, and of its relations to such key areas of our life as education, religion, the family, and the community, in a spirit of sober realism. We are better able now to stand aside from past rhetorical slogans about our ideals and survey the American social scene in a colder, more searching light that accords well with precepts of historical objectivity. In what many would define as a current national malaise, there lurks at least this one advantage.

The American Character

The conventional portrait of the American character centers in such concepts as individualism (especially in the economic realm), competitive success-seeking, pursuit of material well-being balanced (or enshrined) by a strident moral idealism, equalitarianism and democracy, mobility and fluidity, optimism, practicality, adaptability, informality (impatience with rules and rituals), and the sort of utilitarianism that prizes efficiency and ingenuity but looks askance at the more pretentious forms of intellectualism. Less flatteringly, observers have pointed to conformism, rootlessness, the lack of respect for fixed standards or institutions, yet rigidity in regard to such areas as divided sex roles, unthinking patriotism, and racial prejudice. Other themes more marginal than these may be added to the list—nostalgia for the frontier and for rural life in general, religiosity at least at a nominal level, and perhaps a fascination with violence, part of an infatuation with exaggerated notions of masculinity.

It has been suggested in a recent book by Michael Kammen that these various traits form contradictions—for instance between individualism and conformity—and therefore that the peculiarity of Americans is their very paradoxicality. This intriguing idea nonetheless presents a problem. Such an approach noticeably raises the level of abstraction of an already very abstract subject. If ambivalence is the pervasive quality of American life, we are left clutching at nothing very specific. Though far from easy, a greater try at concreteness might be helpful in attempting to winnow fact from fiction. The key traits that have frequently been named ought to be measured against the actual record of tendencies and behavior in the recent past.

It is worthwhile at the outset to see if we cannot simplify our list of character traits. Many of them may be seen to involve a single issue, the relation between the individual and various restraining forces which represent inherited custom and continuity. The positing of a high degree of social atomization in America, the absence of an automatic surrender to the claims of these external agencies or forces, was central to the Tocquevillean concept of the American character so widely put forward years ago. If Americans are individualists, then one may hypothesize that these institutions are relatively weak. Mobility, both social and geographical, no doubt is another corollary of such a conception of individual autonomy and freedom.

A second cluster of values from the same list centers on the idea of equality among people. But it should be recognized from the outset that the notion of equality has usually been embraced only with major qualifications. Legal equality is often distinguished from social equality, and equality of opportunity finds readier support than the goal of a literal equality of condition. Further, equality may be earnestly valued within an in-group which is indifferent toward the similar claims of outsiders. Equality is thus a somewhat weaker theme in the American imagination. In its more thoroughgoing versions, it is a partisan rallying cry for liberals or radicals, whereas nearly everyone identifies with individualism in some sense—economic among conservatives, intellectual and self-expressive among liberals. Nonetheless, since equality enters to some degree into the very idea of democracy, it offers another highly important touchstone for exploration in the present context. Character traits relating to practicality and informality are tied into the idea of equality, for they represent an impatience with custom, form, and ritual ultimately traceable to dislike of irrationally imposed social hierarchies.

The concepts of individualism and equality thus compose two major focal points for testing generalizations about the American character. But discussions about them will benefit from an added degree of concreteness. This is supplied by confining ourselves to four specific institutional areas in American life—the family, education, religion, and community. In each of these areas we shall want to look for symptoms of overall strength or weakness (relevant to our hypothesis about individualism), as well as for internal trends that disclose something about the presence or absence of these key American values.

What these four institutional areas have in common is that they serve as potential agencies of the first import for the transmission of inherited moral values. Together with the large-scale corporate organization, they inform the child who is growing up of a whole range of traditional, customary obligations and expectations deeply connected with the functioning of the society. They tell the child what is considered normal and what eccentric. If they work effectively, they channel youthful energy into safe outlets. They are the engines of social cohesion and continuity.

Of course this defines their role in terms of an ideal model, and one that is conservative in its implications. In actual fact, at no time or place have these four agencies operated at some imagined "full strength" in these terms, in total harness with one another. And great changes have been going on within each of them. At the outset, in the American context, we should remind ourselves of how unevenly they penetrate the lives of the population. This can be seen most simply by reflecting on the amounts of time we typically allocate to each. Just about all of us are involved in family relationships on the day-to-day level for great portions of our existence. For the large majority, this heavy involvement continues straight through, with little interruption, until old age. The family thus claims nearly coequal status with work as one of the two central institutional realms in modern life. By contrast, none of the other three areas is so pervasive in its claims upon our attention. Education most closely approaches it, for schooling again is a universal daily exprience during a considerable span of years. But for most people it is over forever by the time one has become an adult. Religion is enormously weaker in terms of the time we habitually spend on it. Less than two-fifths of the population attend church regularly, and, though the experience may be spread across a lifetime, it occupies but a single hour per week. Finally, the steady impact of the community and its rituals and organizations is harder to assess. On its face, such an impact is still less substantial than that of religion for churchgoers, occurring only in brief snatches of newscasts, headline scanning, and on the rare days of elections. Yet there is a sense in which the average person may feel aware of his membership in a community—a neighborhood, town, or city—on a much more constant basis. Partly this is the result of the visual reinforcement of daily making one's way through some of its architectural and asphalt mazes. These effects, however, are elusive compared to those of the family and school, where face-to-face contacts create far more intensity of interaction.

The unevenness of our immersion in these several areas means that, given our present society, the active shapers of the experience of growing up most often include relatives and educational systems (we should also add work prospects and childhood and teenage peer cultures). Religion and, in all likelihood, general community norms, are apt to be notable for their relative absence.

The American Family

Let us begin, then, with the realm that usually involves us for the most hours across the broadest slice of our lives—the family. The belief about the family most widely current is that it is breaking down. Though certain evidence supports this, recent scholarly research suggests a need for careful qualification.

Some hallowed myths about the history of the family are being destroyed. We used to think that before the industrial revolution, extended kin networks spanning several generations commonly lived together under the same roof. The nuclear family—consisting of husband, wife, and children by themselves—was pictured as a distinctly recent creation, itself a major symptom of family breakdown. But now we know that the nuclear family has been the norm throughout American history, from earliest colonial times, and in England as well since at least the sixteenth century. In fact, some scholars question whether extended kin networks have ever normally bedded down together no matter how far back one goes in the record of Western Europe. In this important sense, there has been far less change than one might have imagined. Indeed, some evidence exists—more in England than in America—that the first phase of industrialization brought families closer together, as relatives huddled in closely shared quarters to pool their scant resources. Of course physical crowding does not always make for domestic peace, and such crowding was traditional for most people in both rural and urban surroundings. All in all, it is far from clear that a "golden age" for the family lies anywhere in the past, at least short of the extremes to be found in tribal and peasant societies. In every period, family life has had its drawbacks.

The key change involves attitudes prevailing within the nuclear family. Genuinely new, beginning in the eighteenth century among the aristocracy and spreading gradually across the whole of society, was the rise of the ideal of romantic love. It is astonishing to realize that the expectation of love as a necessary attribute of marriage is so recent. Before then, marriage had been entered into much more matter-of-factly (or for property-oriented advantages among the wealthy). It was a custom to which one automatically submitted, making do with whoever of the correct social level might be locally available. Recently marriage has been made into a far more deliberate (in that sense, voluntary) act. Much higher emotional stakes therefore enter into it. In the present century, for the first time in history, it has come to be considered actually wrong to go on living with someone whom one does not love. This far more demanding expectation about the nature of marriage may lie at the root of the rising divorce rate and also tell us the most about what is distinctive in the meaning and function of the family in our own time. Our impression of the instability or breakdown of the family derives largely from the new kind of burden we have placed on it in these psychological terms.

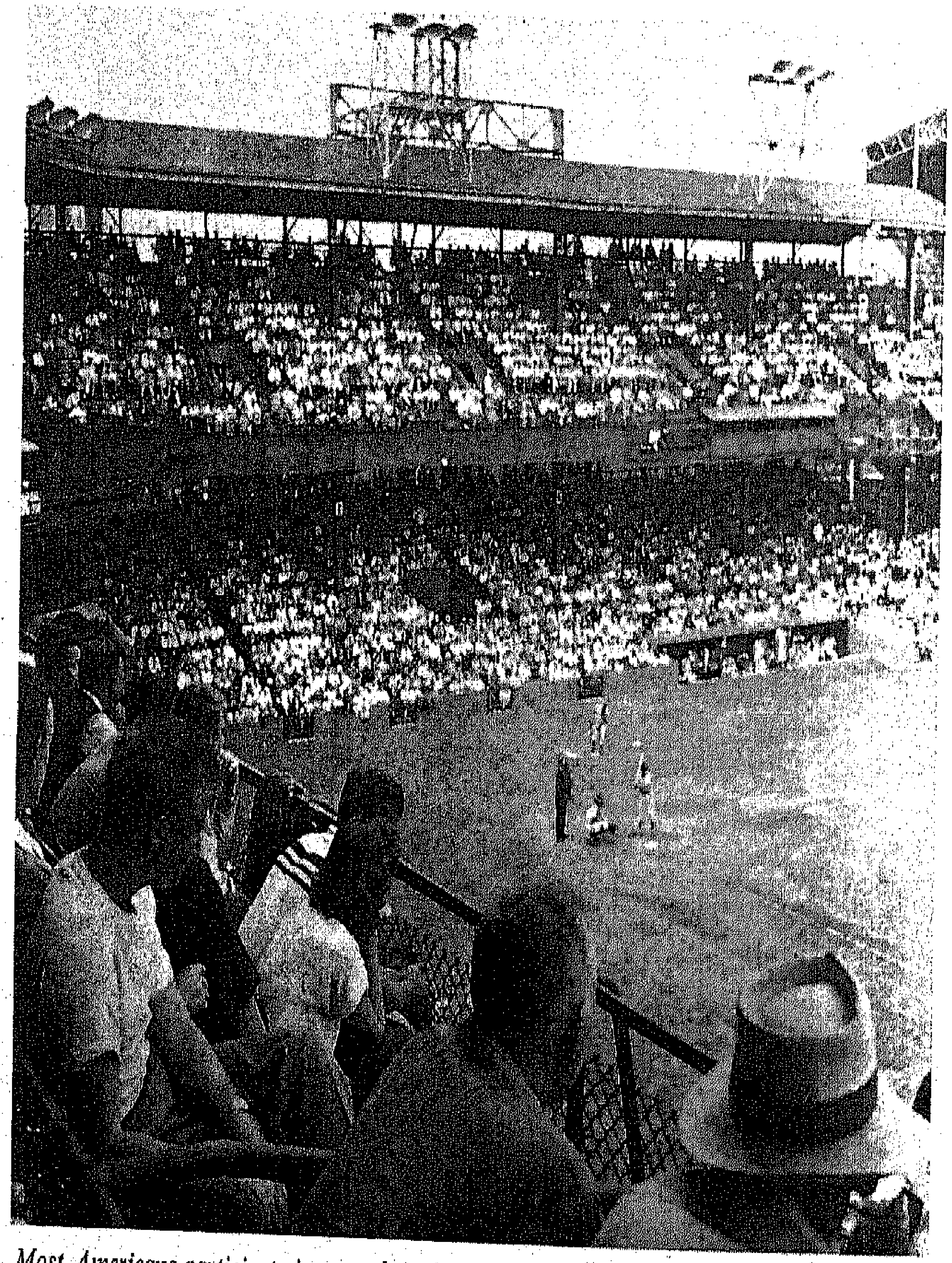
In this fashion individualism may be said to have penetrated into the heartland of family life. If we as individuals (spouses, children) fail to gain steady emotional satisfaction from the other members of our family, we now feel cheated out of something that is our due. Psychologists, soap opera script writers, and fortunetellers all keep telling us we have the right to be loved. Thus the standard childrearing practices of earlier centuries, which included much casual brutality, now seem shocking. And it is

ever easier to conceive of separating ourselves from even the closest of relatives—wives, husbands, parents—when they fail to live up to this ideal of warmth. Individually to break away, to seek new fortunes elsewhere, becomes the common remedy for what is now regarded as an intolerable situation. But to require affection from the others with whom we are in physical proximity is a distinctly modern outlook. It is an aspect of the revolution of rising expectations. Ultimately, it may be the result of the more luxurious living standard that permits us to spread ourselves thinly within houses (often occupying and cherishing private bedrooms) and routinely to travel across far wider distances, either for new opportunities or for escape from oppressive family relationships. Perhaps the wish for such an escape was always there; new in world history is the ability to act upon it.

For a long time, in the nineteenth century, these changing attitudes were disguised by an upsurge of strident moralism, at once both stern and sentimental, centered in a concept of domestic virtue. Love and devotion were insisted upon in the newly intense way, but they were supposed to endure for a lifetime. Perhaps fortunately in this one respect, a relatively high death rate (especially for women in childbirth) functioned as an alternative to divorce in reducing the length of typical marriage spans. It is also possible that nineteenth century marriages were more often genuinely happier than our own, for the reason that men and women then still accepted the inevitability of living together "till death do us part" and set their sights accordingly. Much restlessness results from the ability to vividly conjure an alternative.

Peculiar to the Victorian age was the idea that both love and permanence were the normal attributes of marriage. Perhaps moralists became so explicit on these themes because of an uneasy apprehension that individualistic attitudes were already threatening to undermine the family as it had been known. At any rate, in the long term theirs was no more than a desperate holding action. For whatever reasons (including the increased longevity of females) the age-old expectation of permanence began to drop out of the formula, and only the modern, surprisingly disintegrative notion of love remained. The facts are blunt: in 1880, only one out of every twenty-one marriages ended in divorce; in 1916, one in nine; today, one in three, and the rate is still rising rapidly.

The technologically created possibilities of modern life are still more directly responsible for another notable change affecting the family, the tendency for its members to spend increased portions of their time apart from one another. In the age of the small farm and the craft-type household industry, husband, wife, and children might intermingle throughout many of their waking hours. Power-driven machinery, which brought



Most Americans participate in several outdoor sports, but they also enjoy watching community or professional sporting events. The major league baseball games in Washington, D.C., attract thousands of fans.

into being the factory, suddenly imposed a pattern at an opposite extreme—each family member isolated on a different job for enormously long hours, the group reuniting only for sleeping, hasty meals, and Sunday leisure. Those who remained on farms experienced a similar if somewhat milder change, as the increasing acreage made possible by mechanization forced task-oriented separations no less effective for being confined within the boundaries of one's own property. In the cities, electric streetcars and automobiles made it usual for husbands to distance themselves from their wives across many miles throughout the day. Ultimately, jet aircraft allowed married pairs at the professional level to pursue careers in cities hundreds of miles apart, coming together only for weekends. It might seem difficult to imagine a version of marriage less attuned to physical proximity—until one recalls the highly traditional case of the naval seaman. Both sailors and contemporary co-career professionals of course manifest a highly exceptional extreme. A final, far broader change operating to detach family members from each other is the rise of universal education. Only since the late nineteenth century, for most Americans, have children routinely been kept away from their parents during a major share of every week, nine months or more per year. The family has lost much of its educative function along with its earlier work-centered ethos.

The shorter work week in the twentieth century has allowed families once again to spend more time together. We have never had so much leisure, and in this could lie the opportunity for a strong resurgence of family life. In fact the long weekend and the vacation are now the central occasions for the family as an institution, the high-point in its rhythms. But leisure is a shakier basis than work for family survival. Work could lock families tightly together while they scrimped and saved. Leisure constantly suggests choice, in contrast to the economic necessities that bound the earlier family. And choice is something that every child, no less than the adults, begins to want to exercise on an individual level. There is no utterly compelling urgency about one thing rather than another. So each person feels entitled to his or her own predilections, resulting in mutually destructive challenges and tugs-of-war. Today's children, unlike those of earlier centuries, start to express these private demands, as something that is after all expected of them, at an astonishingly early age. Equality is then defined as ice cream cones for everyone and individualism as the right to insist upon one's own flavor.

The aggressive independence of young children in America was widely noted long before the era of consumerism. The anecdotes of early nineteenth-century British travellers abound with examples of wildly undisciplined, self-assertive offspring regarded with pride by their own parents. ("He's a sturdy republican, sir!" was the frequent fatherly boast after some public outrage.) Here we seem to arrive at the nub of individualism as a value in American society. To strike out boldly on your own (especially if you were a boy), to "make it" with no assistance from the older generation, came more and more to be the approved ideal, recognized by parents and children alike. With such a wide consensus of opinion behind it, it cannot be described as a generational "revolt." In cases where parents or the habitually desperate schoolteachers used the rod freely in an effort to break the child's unruly spirit, sympathy flowed toward the uncowed victim. My great-grandmother, whom I remember as a sweet, gentle woman, suffered from a cruel stepmother in Bangor, Maine, in the 1850's. Her response was to leave home entirely alone at sixteen to join a married sister in San Francisco. Uprooting oneself, moving west, cutting oneself off from the older generation—these were already the applauded social norms, though one was expected thereupon to form a new family of one's own, and the subsequent life was one of endured hardships and sacrifices rather than of leisure. Eventually, when the elderly were relegated to the impersonal care of institutions, the change reflected less a fundamental shift in values than it did the facts of growing longevity, affluence, and the general rise of bureaucratic organizations in American life.

In the nineteenth century, individualism was primarily economic in orientation. During the last few decades, particularly within the middle class, a distinct new stage has been reached. In a time when a high material level of living can be more or less taken for granted, and when psychoanalytic perspectives have largely replaced both the economic and the religious, individualism is by no means abandoned, but becomes redefined more introspectively as self-expression and self-fulfilment. Such desires, no doubt ultimately narcissistic, may have much to do with the recent striking reduction in the number of children that families wish to raise. Once again technology, in the form of the contraceptive pill, makes possible the change. But the pill would matter little if large families were still in vogue. Children are coming to be seen as a distraction and a nuisance, forcibly deflecting attention from one's own pleasures, including the wife's hunger to pursue her own career. Work itself, at this upper-middle level of the society, is looked upon increasingly as an avenue toward self-enrichment rather than as a brute necessity. If followed to its logical end, the ethic of self-development would eventually lower the population to a point requiring no worry over the too rapid consumption of physical resources. Meanwhile, husband and wife often use each other—perhaps unconsciously—as vehicles for their own self-fulfillment. This deeper trend lies back of much of the current demand for "women's liberation." In part, the call for equalitarianism in sex roles stems from the drive toward individual self-fulfillment at all costs.

Thus we have begun to use the word "relationships" to describe the connecting links we have with others, even the supposedly most intimate. It is a cold, impersonal word, implying transitoriness and the possibility of manipulation. Such a term would have seemed impossibly artificial as applied to husband and wife, parents and children, in 1900. (One then had "relationships" in one's business.) And a sense of staleness with one's partner, which the man formerly circumvented by resort to prostitutes, now brings forth the idea on both sides of switching, dropping, and experimenting. The blind loyalty that would make years of staleness in a marital relationship seem tolerable, grows ever weaker. The key question is whether the family can survive on its new, more wholly psychological basis—on love, rather than on assumed necessity. It will gradually be answered in the arena of the suburban bedroom.

The emergence of "youth culture," of the conception of adolescence as a distinct stage in life, is a final recent distracting change, dating from the opening years of the twentieth century. Childhood itself had been given similar status in the popular imagination only a bit earlier. So long as children customarily worked, whether in and around the home or outside, they were looked upon as miniature adults. The shift in their economic function from producers to consumers appears to have made possible their definition as beings suspended in an artificial oasis, removed from the normal cares of life. Children and youth are now each assumed to be living inside their own specially defined cocoons of patterned pleasure-seeking. Ultimately the fate of youth culture seems less important than what goes on in that crucial meeting-ground between husband and wife. For these two now have it in their power to reduce children and youth to far less significant numerical sectors of the total population.

Is the family doomed? How deeply do all these tendencies penetrate American society at present? Depending on where you live, geographically, ethnically, in terms of social level, the situation can seem

Giving thanks to God for their daily bread—commonly known as "saying grace" or "asking the blessing", is the custom of many American families.

enormously different. Mid-America offers a reserve of stabler, less innovative values. (Of course its literal influence in the overall mix can be exaggerated; a few years ago it was surprisingly announced that nearly half of all Americans now live within fifty miles of either sea coast. Yet what we call the spirit of mid-America thrives in Glendale, California, and in Queens.) Certain ethnic groups—one thinks especially of Italian-Americans—cling to an intensely family-centered style of existence. And the working and lower-middle classes, who still form the bulk of the population, go on leading lives conditioned by rather blunt, traditional economic pressures. Simply to have the home, the back yard, the inexpensive vacation, may define the ambition of the largest number of Americans even at this date. The restless quest for psychological self-fulfilment remains largely a class-delimited preoccupation. But at the other end of the social scale, chronic unemployment has produced rising family breakdown from causes entirely unlike those affecting affluent suburbanites. We now know that until recently blacks enjoyed a remarkably stable family life, given the handicaps. Even under slavery, where marriages were banned, lifelong pairing was the actual norm. Only in the last decade or two has there been a dramatic rise in the percentage of female-headed black families, occurring within the severely deprived, disorganized neighborhoods of the northern cities.

Family life of some sort is still the overwhelming rule in the United States. Rising divorce statistics may be misleading in two respects. First, they mask the fact that the great bulk of divorced persons remarry. Second, a major share of divorces happen to lower-class couples who married in their teens, apparently too timid to live together out of wedlock. Thus, ironically, a certain conservatism leads to swelling figures of divorce. And, though there has been much publicity about the generally more privileged youth who do cohabit without getting married, so far one discovers no numerical dent in the overall marriage rate. Communal experiments have involved only very small numbers. And even most of these unusual environments have continued to stress the paired couple in their lifestyle. All in all, lifelong companionship may be receding as an ideal, but not the notion of remaining with one other person over a considerable period of time.

Two-thirds of all the marriages in the United States still succeed. So often silent majorities of this kind are too readily forgotten in sensational analyses of the trend toward breakdown. Perhaps the most remarkable fact is that, despite all the pressures to the contrary, marriage along recognizable lines so widely survives. Family routines and occasions—birthdays, anniversaries, middleclass entertainment patterns—continue to occupy a very large share of the energy and attention of great numbers of persons. The thriving greeting-card industry depends on this.

Regardless of all the changes, a distinct vision of the good life in America—only somewhat less potent than its equivalent among the British working-class—centers upon the quiet satisfactions of the enjoyment of domestic comfort, the pleasure of rearing children, and the assumption that the family remains the eternal unit of shared strivings. Divorce, despite its frequency, is typically a wrenching than a casual experience for those who go through it. Again, though women may be gaining greater independence and self-esteem, in millions of cases husbands and wives manage to allocate responsibilities, forge reasonable compromises, and remain together more or less as before. (They have had practice. Women have long enjoyed considerably more freedom in America than in any other culture.) The family, at its root, is such a powerful conception that it may be able to endure through all these seemingly profound changes in its function and direction. It is, at any rate, too early to write it off as an institutional force serving as a basic social balance-wheel.

Education for Work and Life

Education, the second major area for analysis, in a sense stands in a contrapuntal relationship to the first, for the school has often been expected to instill values and habits in pronounced contrast to those of the home. It imposes the discipline of impersonal standards, as against the indulgence (or the less rational discipline) of mothers and fathers. In America, school systems have expanded in the atmosphere of an anticipated tug-of-war with parents. This war has had a class and ethnic aspect to it, as middle-class Protestants have sought to impose their morality upon a frequently unwilling immigrant population, in the name of what was once called "Americanization."

The traditional American commitment to education has been overstated. It centered in the ideal of simple literacy, including the ability to handle elementary arithmetic problems, as practical equipment for living a useful life. No doubt the value of equalitarianism was involved, in the sense that it was believed everyone should be able to compete on the basis of such minimum intellectual resources. The drive for universal schooling took on the aspect of an intense crusade only with the advent of industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century; it was further delayed in the South. On the local level it was often stingily supported. To keep taxes down, teachers were paid extremely low salaries. As late as 1915, many rural schools lacked even outdoor privies; the children were expected simply to use the bushes. Black children in most areas were segregated into parallel schools of their own, where conditions were distinctly worse.

In the emerging big cities, ward politicians held control of school systems for a time in the late nineteenth century. Teachers were often forced to give monetary kickbacks to politicians to keep their jobs. Here too taxpayers were reluctant to assess themselves for adequate school buildings. For decades in Chicago and elsewhere, far fewer desks were actually provided than would accommodate the total number of school-age children in the city, even though there was a compulsory attendance law. In 1900, a teacher was routinely expected to teach sixty or more children in a single class. Teachers were professionals in name only; they were required to have little training and were treated by administrators like marionettes. Textbooks conveyed the basics with a strong flavoring of abstract traditional morality. At the same time, these books were notably anti-intellectual in flavor, preaching a practical utilitarianism suspicious of broader cultural horizons.

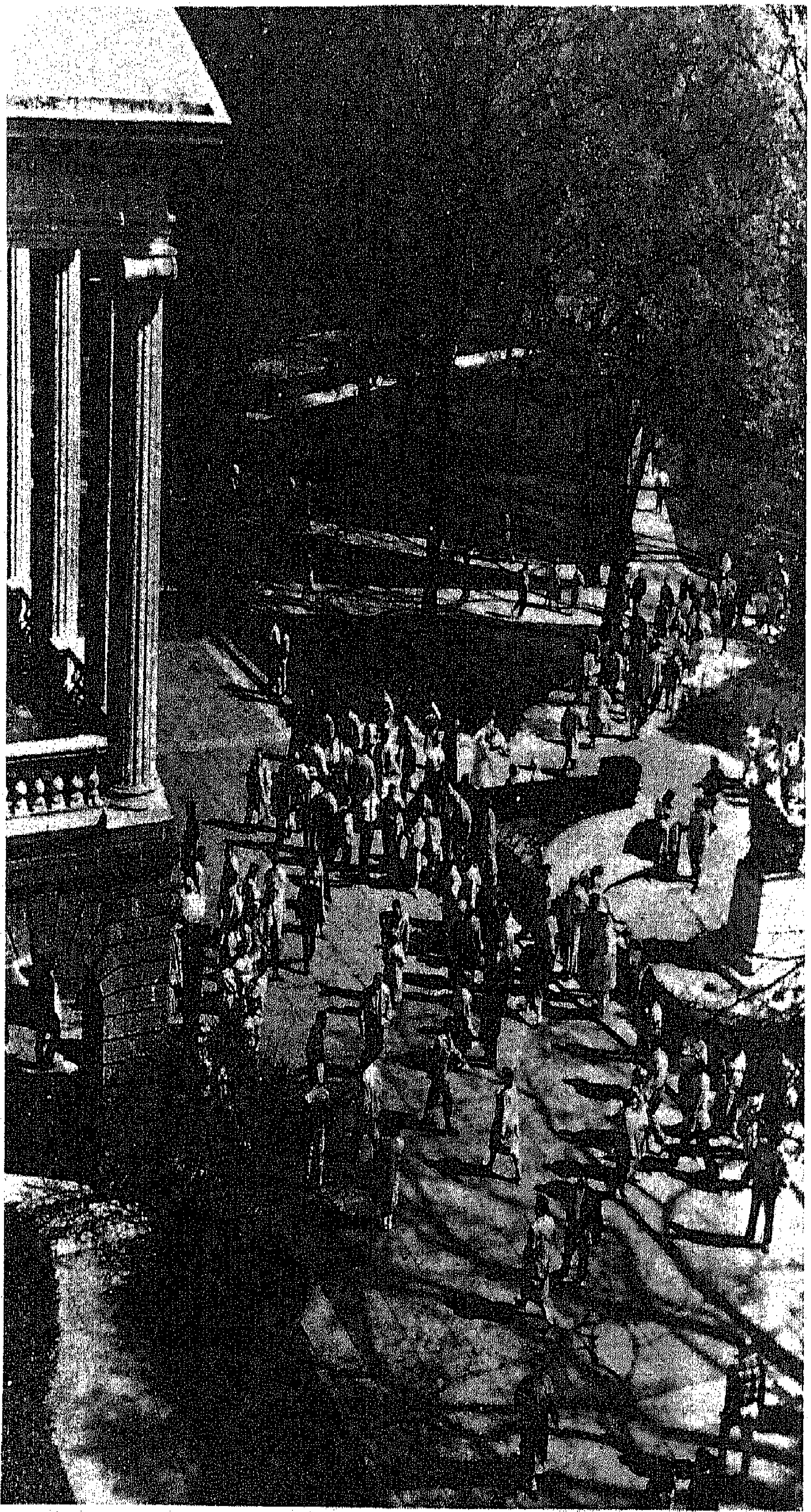
The high school remained very much an elite institution, existing largely to prepare the tiny minority bound for college. As late as 1910, less than 5 percent of the age-group went to college. A dozen first-rate universities had been created in the United States in the late nineteenth-century, in partial imitation of the German model, then pre-eminent in the world. Behind them struggled hundreds of other colleges and universities, many of them with standards too low to permit their graduates to go directly on to advanced study.

Objectively, there has thus been a great improvement in American education at all levels during the course of the twentieth century. While teacher salaries have risen faster than the cost of living, class size has gone down to an expected twenty-five to thirty pupils. Teachers have gained somewhat greater autonomy and respect; their training has improved. Compulsory attendance laws have been increasingly well enforced. Between 1890 and 1920, in city after city, school systems were detached from the corrupt political machines and placed under the control of non-partisan superintendents, to whom local boards of education typically deferred. By mid-century, high school graduation was the norm, not the exception, at least for whites. The colleges boomed, likewise becoming mass institutions, although a great share of their increase flowed into a new network of two-year junior colleges, supported by local communities, which began to spring up in many sections of the country. A more affluent society had clearly begun displaying a new degree of generosity in the range and amount of education it would supply. In large part this stemmed from an awareness that a shift had taken place in the kinds of employment available in the society. Jobs requiring sheer animal muscle were declining, while white-collar jobs, often demanding some degree of technical expertise, expanded. The change accompanied a vast movement of people off farms into cities and suburbs. Too often we forget how relatively recent all these profound alerations have been.

The signs are that this process of transformation is now over. In the last few years the depopulation of rural areas has finally stopped. Taxpayer penury has set in again, partly out of recognition that school bureaucracies were sometimes creating over-bloated empires. A huge jump in the professional sector of the population in the 1960's left an aftermath of overcrowding at that level. Lower-middle class people began to realize that they had been (or would be) over-trained for the routine jobs they could realistically aspire to. As the birth rate went down, schools found themselves with fewer numbers of children to teach. University enrollments also levelled off. There began to be a serious oversupply of teachers. Education appeared to be headed for a period of relative decline.

On another level, expectations had risen faster than objective improvements in the educational system, producing a growing sense of disillusionment and skepticism. The paradox was that in 1900, with sixty students per grammar school classroom, education had been assumed to work. It was regarded as the great molder of the kind of society the middle-class wanted to create, homogeneous, attuned to the needs of industrialism, ambitious within the accepted moral limits. Moreover, despite crowded conditions, immigrants—with only some notable exceptions—took to the American grade schools in a spirit of at least partial willingness. They recognized the need to learn to read and do simple sums. Perhaps immigrant children learned more of their English on the streets than in the classroom, but in these decades their desire to conform and get along inconspicuously in the strange New World setting could be intense. For the masses of blacks who replaced them in the poorer city neighborhoods after World War II, school, even in this basic sense, seemed far more unreal. Centuries of racism had produced the widespread attitude that it was meaningless to try to compete in the white man's world. Meanwhile, schoolteachers were often from the most ambitious white ethnic minorities, projecting an attitude of intolerance for failure. In the 1950's and 1960's, urban schools increasingly became marked by scenes of open violence, erupting out of a background of sullen defiance. Schools came more and more to resemble prisons.

Racial integration of schools slowly gained ground after the Supreme Court ruling of 1954. But as white resistance to full integration manifested



Students stop to chat as they make their way to classes on the wooded campus of the University of Wisconsin.

itself, black leaders began instead demanding a new, more dignified form of separatism, whereby schools would be adjusted to the realities of black culture, rather than insisting upon homogenized, traditional ideals. A belief in equality of opportunity had been the driving force behind the integrationist campaign. But the new desire for neighborhood and ethnic autonomy was neither equalitarian nor individualist; instead it stressed membership identity in a group smaller than that of the societal whole. Despite the clash of such a conception with some of the most traditional American values, whites often regarded the new black insistence upon cultural autonomy with relief, for it seemed to signal an end to any expectations of forced interracial contact. Pluralism became a mask for the survival of racism, at the cost of the social homogenization that maximizes the role of merit.

Meanwhile, urban upper-middle class whites had likewise been losing confidence in the public school system. But the source of their malaise was different. In part, it sprang from a panicky desire to continue to avoid contact with blacks—the same motive that sometimes produced physical flight into the farther suburbs. Private schools had always been a fixture of elite life, especially on the East Coast; now they became more of a routine expectation in the larger cities, signalling the arrival of something like the British dual system of education along class lines. They spread widely in the South during the 1960's, partly as a means of evading genuine racial integration.

By a smaller faction among the advantaged, the public schools were attacked on more philosophical grounds. Liberal intellectuals deplored their standardizing effect, their inadequate concern for individual growth and expression. School superintendents, successful victors in the earlier war against the political bosses, were perceived as entrenched empire-builders, incredibly self-satisfied and ingrown. With such bureaucrats in charge of them, schools would foster the free-ranging development of the mind and the emotions. The earlier progressive education movement, which in the 1930's had gained sway in many school systems, trumpeted the slogans of individualism but failed to work enough actual transformation. The rhetoric of educators, whether reformist or stand-pat, appeared to outsiders to float in a cloudland of vagueness that often approached incomprehensibility. One message could be understood, that a hierarchy was determined to go on protecting its own power. A few radical scholars and publicists reacted by questioning the value of compulsory attendance and even of schooling itself as an institution.

Thus from both ends of the society, bottom and top, came accusations that the schools as they existed reflected the plodding (yet doggedly universalistic) values of the lower-middle class. On this every minority could agree, though the affluent whites were divided between the small but vocal element seeking radical individual liberation and the more numerous segment who instead wished conventional academic training, but at a forcefed pace, conducted in surroundings insulated from the distracting influence of the ill-motivated. As a practical matter, blacks concentrated on gaining local control of the segments of the public school systems that served them, while white dissidents more often looked to private schools as an alternative. (So, as always, did Catholics, for their own reasons.)

The result, from all angles, was growing loss of confidence in the public school system as an all-embracing, homogenizing force in the society. By most spokesmen, neither individualism nor equality was so much desired as the freedom to live out one's life dream as a member of a social class or an ethnic group, unhampered by outside interference. The change in attitude appeared to signal a relaxation of the effort toward achieving a better condition for everyone, defined in some single, sweeping fashion, and instead a withdrawal to the comforts (scant or abundant) of a much narrower conception of community.

Higher education had also been the focus of a more universalistic dream, qualified only by a conception of merit. Of course this had once concealed its subservience in social terms to a small minority of the Protestant elite. (Jews were widely excluded from faculty positions, and limited by student quotas, at some of the "best" American universities until the revelations of the Nazis triggered shame.) After 1945 the great rise in attendance obscured the continued predominance of a small number of leading universities. The bulk of the newly admitted enjoyed a style of training, in junior and state colleges, little superior to that of the high school, Attendance at such institutions was often only a socially acceptable holding action, allowing participation in the pleasures of the youth culture and postponing as long as possible the choice among routine, unexciting careers.

At the top level, though, thanks in part to an influx of European refugees, the American university in the 1950's began tardily to fulfill the great expectations of its founders back in the 1890's. The tone of seriousness increased, as a much larger share of students now anticipated going on to graduate school. Fear over Russian achievements in the wake of Sputnik occasioned an uncharacteristic if short-lived national sympathy for basic research, giving higher education an artificial boom from about 1958 to 1966. The scholar and the expert were heralded as the social leaders and planners of the future. It was falsely imagined that politicians would closely listen to their advice. In actual fact, knowledge in hundreds of specialties did enormously expand. The intellectual exhilaration

of those days was genuine. But after 1967 student radicalism, constricted budgets, the resurgence of popular anti-intellectualism, and the grim realities of the lowered birthrate dimmed the entire picture. American intellectuals of all political persuasions, so hopeful in the mid-1960's, emerged demoralized in the mid-1970's.

On its face the entire American educational system had grown far stronger and more pervasive in recent decades. But the quantitative outreach masked inner hollowness. Schools were unable to function as an effective moral agency when they fell prey to the dividedness of the population as to what values, what norms, were to be transmitted. Youth of nearly all kinds regarded schools with increasing puzzlement, detachment, and alienated rejection. Yet, in bloated numbers, youth still marched through these institutions, finding in them at least a certain value as centers for social aggregation.

Education, probably more than any other institution, presented the spectacle of an enormous gap between the rhetoric that surrounded it and the realities of its everyday performance. These realities—which could include examples of dedicated teaching—seemed almost impossible to fathom, so blurred were they behind the shrill outcry of all the mutually discordant critics. An apparatus existed. It was not being put to best use. It probably could not be given the vested stake of the bureaucracy that ran it and the conflicting demands of the various kinds of parents. In this latter respect, the situation mirrored the absence of value consensus in American society on many important levels. If there was a single American ethic, it could no longer confidently imprint itself upon the young in the course of their formal training.

"In God We Trust"

When we move from education to religion, we shift from an area of growth (however much we may dispute its meaning) to one of outright decline. The fundamental fact about the long-term history of religion in America is its lessening degree of influence—the secularization of the society.

The process goes back much farther than we used to think. Recent research has revealed seasons of widespread backsliding even in seventeenth-century New England. Periodic revivals would then occur. Rationalism and skepticism were widespread at the time of the American Revolution. We tend to forget this because of the intense new wave of evangelical piety in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Then, extending roughly from 1850 to 1880, a new and apparently decisive trend toward secularization set in within the urban middle-class. Initially it did not take the form of an abandonment of church attendance, but of a shift in the internal content of religion, away from an other-wordly theology and toward a style of preaching centered in admonitions toward good conduct. Sometimes the new message was complacently conservative, as if specifically designed for businessmen; sometimes, by 1900, it was reformist, urging a changed society. In either case, it now took its tone from the surrounding worldly social context, rather than

Sunday Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception church in Washington, D.C.

from the traditional distinctive Christian gospel of individual salvation. Thus, although the percentage of Americans who are church members has actually increased in the twentieth century, the rise reflects the very fact that specific theological beliefs of newcomers are not scrutinized as they once were. And meanwhile church attendance per capita has been slowly but steadily declining ever since Gallup polls were first taken on the subject at the end of the 1930's—with the exception of a temporary upsurge during a few years of the mid-1950's. In all parts of the country today except the West Coast, about 40 percent of the population attends church during a typical week. The Far West, with its better climate, finds only about 30 percent attracted.

The United States became more heterogeneous in religious terms after the mid-nineteenth century, as immigrants poured in who were Catholic or Jewish. In general, secularization of beliefs and attitudes spread as rapidly among Jews as it did among Protestants. Catholics remained noticeably more devout; indeed, there is evidence that their religious zeal increased in the New World, the church becoming a symbol of continuity in an unfamiliar environment. Only in the 1960's did American Catholicism begin to show some of the same symptoms of inner atrophy that had long marked Protestantism and Judaism. It seemed likely, in the calmer atmosphere of the 1970's, that religiosity would continue to ebb slowly from the American consciousness, rather than being affected by any abrupt shock waves.

And yet only a tiny percentage of Americans would declare outright that they were atheists. In a nominal sense the idea of a religious commitment seemed to be more widespread than ever, though at the vaguest possible level of belief in "something." The commonest pattern appeared to be that of saying very little about religion, and living one's life as if it did not exist, but stopping short of an open, public break with it. Here was an area where individualism seemingly functioned as a value. It was not good manners to question anyone else's beliefs. Yet this convention may reflect the fact that beliefs had become rather unimportant. Even a generation ago parents would commonly make strenuous objections to the interfaith marriages of their offspring. Now, one Jew out of three marries a Gentile, and the frequency of Protestant-Catholic marriages is also rising. The older generation, so seldom successful in determining the life course of its children, has finally surrendered in this once extremely touchy area. In the 1950's, Will Herberg wrote that Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism had become three empty boxes. But part of his point was that each of them was then symbolically being maintained in aloof purity from the others. Now even the last is no longer true, except among small pockets of enthusiasts.

Vitality remains in American religion, but it is at the fringes, in groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and other Fundamentalist sects, and, for a small sector of the middle-class, in Asian mysticism. These are all religious movements that have continued to require a series of demanding beliefs from their followers. Emphatically they stand out against the mainstream of American life, offering deep psychological rewards to those who are alienated from its pleasure-seeking values. Often, though not always, they are intensely charismatic, attracting converts not just to a doctrine or world-view but, along with that, to an inspired leader or guru. In style, and often in content, these extreme religious groups are no different from those, such as the Anabaptists and Levellers, that appeared during the Reformation, struggling to survive on the fringes of Protestantism. In American terms, they are no sudden phenomenon of the 1960's. Rather they have had a continuous history. What seemed new about them was a distinct resurgence, based upon an appeal to youth. Previously they had been regarded as survivals in marginal small town or rural locations such as Utah and the Southern states, or in urban centers of the recently transplanted, such as Los Angeles. It was assumed that with growing sophistication they would disappear. Instead they briefly boomed. One hazards the guess, however, that with the return to less obviously unsettling times, we shall again hear less of them, though we have been reminded of their remarkable resiliency.

In general, religion now reflects other outside values and tugs of interest, ranging from women's liberation to ethnicity. It is an arena where these social conflicts are still occasionally fought out, but it fails to pull anything like its nominal weight as an independent force. In most of the present world the nation-state, the political ideology, or the aspiring social group has replaced God as the focus for active, ardent personal commitment. The fact that considerably more Americans than Europeans still go to church tells us little of real importance about the American character. The church, like the high school, is mainly a social meeting-ground.

A Sense of Belonging

Like religion, the more nebulous realm of the community would appear to be a declining factor in American life. (For a contrary interpretation, emphasizing recent neglected examples of civic renewal, see John Fischer's article in *The New York Times*, August 1, 1975, p. 25.) In broad terms such observers as Robert Bellah have pointed to the rituals of civic observance as a modern substitute for religion, involving the transfer of energy and loyalty from an other-worldly focus to the social order. While such an analysis helps explain the phenomenon of mass patriotism, which is itself only about a hundred and fifty years old, on the more local and immediate level it may confuse the wishes of community-minded political scientists with the realities of recent American life.

If we could return to the American town or city of 1900, one of the most striking differences we would immediately notice was the much higher level of participation, in an affirmative, enthusiastic sense, in political activity. This held true both among the evangelically minded reformers seeking to purify municipal government and also, strikingly, among the immigrants who were so frequently tied in to the "boss"-ruled machines. In the latter case, a large share of the attention was practical, linked to the quest for jobs, food, and favors. Yet the result in either event was the same: involved participation. The highest percentages of voter turn-out in our history date from the late nineteenth century, paradoxically a time when the two major parties offered almost no contrast to each other in terms of issues. (The maximum in a presidential race was 80 percent, in the contest between Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison in 1888.) Huge crowds at political rallies, torchlight parades, and Fourth of July speeches set the tone. Party loyalties ran very high. The "independent voter," the man who takes pride in making up his own mind at the last minute, was scarcely dreamed of. Politics and civic activism in general went forward in the cheer-the-team atmosphere we now associate with football. The contrast between then and now measures the tendency toward privatization and withdrawal of our commitments from the open, public arena that has occurred during the course of the twentieth century. This is not the result of a change in the caliber of men willing to run for high office. If anything, despite some recent instances to the contrary, a larger number of broad-minded and idealistic candidates run at present than were typical in the 1890's. The earlier automatic intense loyalties existed in a political context which, to our view, appears dull, humdrum, and corrupt. A bit later, within reform circles during the Progressive Era (1901-1917), millions of voters sustained the optimistic belief that through their participation the system could be changed—abuse could be corrected. Though some of that hope survives on the national level today, surfacing in the self-congratulation after the outcome of Watergate, on the state and local civic level there is a far more prevalent attitude of cynicism and powerlessness. It almost seems as though a certain naiveté was required in order to sustain a confident faith in the workings of democratic institutions.

Political scientists, if they are committed to an ideal of universal, harmonious participation in the life of the community, frequently lament this alteration in the American consciousness. Rightly they perceive in cynicism a basic threat to the social order. But the change is in large part a result of the fact that people—ordinary people—have become somewhat more discerning. During the election campaign of 1972, television cameras invaded a Polish-American working-class home on the south side of Milwaukee to record that the husband and wife were leaning in opposite directions, quite sophisticatedly weighing issues and personalities, and sincerely unable to predict how they would vote in advance of election day. How unthinkable this display of cool, measured independence would have been in 1900! Yet the very act of standing back from the fray to make up one's own mind, regarding all slogans and speeches with an inbuilt suspicion, detaches us from the automatic, enthusiastic loyalties that make for an "organic" state of social health. It might seem that when the Poles of Milwaukee behave somewhat like liberal academic intellectuals, the society is in grave danger. Of course the opposite still exists in the old-fashioned style of enthusiasm among the supporters of George Wallace.

It may be that some of this worry is overblown. Privatization, when it amounts to holding aloof from the knee-jerk responses of the crowd, might alternatively be regarded as a further extension of the traditional American value of individualism. It could be offered as evidence that other-directedness, after all, has been retreating rather than advancing, despite the talk we used to hear about rising conformity in the 1950's. It might even be argued that low voter turnout in a race between Nixon and McGovern (given what voters knew about Nixon at the time) recorded a highly understandable mass state of indecision. Who would want to go back to the days of delirious, unquestioning partisanship for the likes of Cleveland and Harrison? Standoffishness toward mediocrity may be a further intrinsic aspect of the revolution of rising expectations, and thus a symptom of enormous progress.

But this leaves us still wondering about the fate of American community-mindedness in the more local sense. Where, concretely, can we locate so much as the memory of it? No doubt the first image that strikes us in this connection is the American small town, especially as it survives in such regions as the Middle West. When we think of community, it is partly of these tree-shaded streets, with their relaxed, slow-moving way of life and shared knowledge of everyone's affairs. Yet historically their collective spirit has often been mixed with prejudice, not as restrictive as pictured in some satirical novels and less so now than in the 1920's, but such towns are seldom havens of diversity or adventure. Small-town Elks clubs have been among the last bastions of outright, blanket discrimination against dark-skinned people in the United States. Within the in-group there is of course much genuine neighborliness and warmth. But in any event, the small town is no longer where most Americans live. Our centralized economic system assures their continuing marginality.

Where else, then, are we to look for symptoms of community spirit in contemporary America? The neighborhoods of big cities sometimes function in this way, though the high rate of in-and-out movement we undergo makes most of them quite impersonal. Moreover, community consciousness in a neighborhood is most apt to leap up defensively against some outside "threat"—once again, typically, a response to a "lower" ethnic group believed to be seeking to worm its way in, or a municipal administration bent on raising taxes. In any event, even such a style of neighborly cohesion is likewise an exception.

A wide tendency of recent years has been the self-conscious attempt to refashion a sense of community on some basis other than geographical. Most importantly, it involves the efforts of ethnic groups to reclaim a sense of their collective identities, after decades or centuries when they had most of all dreamed of being treated like anybody else. Behind the artificiality of many such attempts lay a deeply genuine hunger for belonging and self-pride. The wearing of the *yarmulke* or the *dashiki* recorded a passionate desire to find some basis, in a disillusioned, post-industrial society, for a meaningful group loyalty that could stand independent of self-interested wielders of bureaucratic power. Equally determined, though quite different, were the efforts to recreate community on a small-group basis among radically inclined youth of the white middle or upper class. The commune movement of the early 1970's had the earmarks of a zealous fad. Though inspired by an ethic of thorough-going equality, it broke down rapidly because the still stronger drive toward individual self-fulfillment collided with the need for sacrifice, producing constant acts of secession, wandering, and recombination. Membership in an ethnic group was, in one important sense, non-voluntary; membership in a commune had all the frailty of the totally deliberate act in an age that applauded never-ending spontaneity. Historically, the communal spirit has thrived most powerfully when allegiances are inborn, automatic, unthinking, indeed with as little accurate knowledge of "outside" ways of life as possible.

Such a recipe brings home to us the extreme difficulty of reconcocting a binding sense of community at this late point in time. We have eaten of the apple of individualism, relativism, and cosmopolitanism. We know that we can break off relationships, shift roles, move about with ease from one scene to another. We find it hard to imagine a world where there is no choice. Even for blacks inclined toward separatism and an African identity, there is truly no going back home again, for they are too intimately aware of white culture and too deeply entwined with it on at least some levels. Even more effortlessly, many communalists can take a vacation with their parents. The cultural worlds we reject go on subtly influencing us. And the sheer fact of so much intermarriage between groups steadily blurs the dividing lines we willfully seek to keep intact. The very intensity of our hunger for community may reflect how far we have drifted along a course leading away from its possible realization.

The yearning was poignant; but its volume was a yardstick recording failure. Ultimately, mobility in the simplest sense—the fact that a third of all American families move each year—may mean everything. Communities—of the more self-conscious types spring to life only haltingly and unevenly because individuals seldom stay put anywhere for very long.

Summing Up

After growing up in America, the next thing we do is settle down. Despite all the childhood fantasizing about Wild West gunfighters, the typical young adult marries and tries to buy a house. Mass-produced tastes, in wives and furnishings, predominate. Individualism detaches us from the claims of many of the centrally inherited customs of the longer past. But it leaves us in no sea of open anarchy. Pattern remains. It is still predictable that department store sales will rise each December. The pursuit of pleasurable self-interest is muffled by all sorts of surviving proprieties. The 1960's counterculture did not, in the long run, erase the commonly accepted boundary between behavior considered normal and eccentric. Far from drifting into the liberated utopia a few bold spirits envisioned, we began to hang up signs reasserting the need for a degree of conventional attire in restaurants. The twin realms of work and family go on prescribing that we spend most of our time acting out highly developed roles. The conversations we overhear in public places still nearly always have this patterned quality to them, permitting ready identification of the speaker's role and status. This is as good an indication as any that American society, as we have long known it, is not on the verge of breaking down. Despite its corrosive effects upon a variety of institutions, individualism has never cut that deep. Indeed, it always amounted more nearly to self-assertion in a variety of ways that themselves rapidly became customary and role-defined. The long-term shift has been from the male-oriented individualism of economic aggrandizement to the more universally defined individualism of pleasure and

"fulfillment." But pleasure-seeking even now is only exceptionally regarded as a solitary activity, and so it remains attached to the realm of expected social roles and stereotypes. We dream of liberation from some of our roles more freely than we once did; we are more commonly capable of viewing them from a greater distance; but most of the time, most of us go right on playing them.

Equality, the other central theme in estimations of the American character, is perhaps more truly corrosive of social roles than individualism—if the roles continue to be linked to perceptions about social status. In part, equality merely asserts anybody ought to be able to play. But that is its milder definition, centering on opportunity. The deeper vison of the radical equalitarian is not to allow the roles with unusual pretensions to dignity and power (tycoon, politician) to exist. The main focus of the drive toward greater equality in America, which ran its course from the mid-1930's to the mid-1960's in a truly impressive fashion, was toward finally realizing the highly traditional goal of equality of opportunity, buttressed by the most elementary kind of equality of all, that pertaining to the legal sphere. But the harsher, levelling version of equality, involving wealth redistribution and forced ethnic balances in schools, was decisively rejected. And indeed, after about 1968, the demand for any kind of further forward movement suddenly lost steam a tantalizing distance short of the full acceptance of blacks into the casual mainstream of American life. Despite some tokenism, numerous social roles and spheres remained quite precisely identified with prestige—suggesting a given social background, above and beyond considerations of training, expertise, maturity, and merit.

Thus America remained a patterned society, not a chaotic one. To grow up in it was till to spend a lot of one's time learning what to and what not to do, even if etiquette was superficially more casual. Indeed, the unmarried sexual affair had its own usual rhythms and expectations of role between the partners. So did the homosexual marriage, and so did the very modern kind of marriage between two career-oriented professionals based on "women's liberation." In all these cases, stability could be achieved, boundaries of acceptable behavior set, and a predictable quality enter into the routines. The changing definition of the family did not lead to copulation in the streets, an outcome that the anarchist Yippie prophet Abbie Hoffman had openly called for in 1968.

Perhaps the remarkable fact is how easy it has been for most Americans to go on living some version of a settled life despite the weakening of some of the central institutions (especially religion and local community) that had propped up the social order in pre-modern Europe, despite the widespread failure of the schools to fill the breech, despite the very high rate of physical mobility, and despite the far more venturesome way in which the family itself was being redefined in some circles. America was no late Roman Empire. Instead, it was a post-industrial society. The interesting comparisons are rather with England, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and Japan. To grow up in America was to slide giddily through a faddish oasis of youth culture and then to enter and be conditioned by the two time-honored realms of work and family, often in surprisingly prosaic versions. The value placed upon individualism, equality, and mobility reduced the once awesome aspect of rigid inherited institutions. But, except in certain neighborhoods where life has been disorganized by continuing poverty and prejudice, the result was another kind of social order, not the absence of one. It may be criticized from numerous points of view—as monotonous, inelegant, or too lacking in human feeling. But, with its clefts and subcultures as well as with its wide areas of consensus, it exists. Beneath the level of all the unruly self-assertion, the child growing up is learning, mainly in informal but highly potent ways outside the classroom, about what it will offer him or her and how one must accommodate oneself to it.

Suggestions for Further Reading

David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954; Phoenix paperback). It is the starting point for all modern thinking on the topic. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Michael Kammen, *People of Paradox: An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civilization* (New York: Knopf, 1972; Vintage paperback). The discussion initiated by Potter is provocatively extended in Kammen's book. **ND/B/C/M/AUC**

Michael Gordon, ed. *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973; paperback). An anthology containing new and important research on the topic.

David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974). The best general history of American public school systems focussing on big cities. The book emphasizes ethnic and political struggles rather than youth culture and content of education.

Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (New York: Doubleday, 1955; Anchor paperback). The book gives a broad perspective, lacking only in a reflection of the further secularization and the upsurge of unorthodox fringe groups that have happened since he wrote.

Robert N. Bellah, *Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974). The book discusses themes of religion and community spirit in America.

Philip E. Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, Beacon paperback). Individualism as a persistent value in American life receives scorching treatment in Slater's book. But this may also be read as a powerful unconscious reflection of the very individualism, oriented toward an ideal of self-fulfillment, that it appears to attack. **B/M/AUC**

"LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

by ROGER A. FORTIN

Return to the Roots

Every generation of Americans has expressed views of the future and demonstrated faith in "America's dream." The American imagination is an imagination of promise. "By assuming a future," John McHale writes in *The Future of the Future*, "man makes his present endurable, and his past meaningful." Living in a predominantly rural setting, American Revolutionaries conceived a society which they hoped would "provide for the security, the quiet, and happy enjoyment of life, liberty, and property." Succeeding generations reaffirmed faith in man's creative ability and hoped to fulfill many of America's promises by implanting the machine into America's wide open space, by linking the continent by railroads and waterways, and by introducing electrical power into urban America. Throughout our history it has seemed that inevitably tomorrow would be better than yesterday and today. Before, during, and after the War for American Independence, religious and political leaders identified religion and republicanism as vehicles for a new social order. In the nineteenth century Americans fused mechanics and electricity with republicanism in the anticipation of a new age. Today much faith is invested in technology and electronics, though it seems, much less is demonstrated in the accompanying bureaucracy.

An examination of political writings, educational essays, and Fourth of July orations in the first twenty years after the Declaration of Independence in 1776 is a logical place to begin a discussion of the concept "America is promises." If one examines the early printed anniversary orations of the day of independence, one discovers that they dealt chiefly with those elements needed to establish a republic. In lucid and imaginative prose the orators, consisting of jurists, clergymen, lawyers, physicians, and retired military officers, monitored the fears, hopes, and desires of the people, and in the process they articulated what they deemed possible and desirable in human and Christian terms. "The present critical moment" in history, declared the Congregationalist minister Enos Hitchcock in his Fourth of July oration, "is teeming with the happiness or wretchedness of millions yet unborn." Without succumbing to utopian illusions, the political visionaries in the formative years of the republic viewed themselves as citizens on the threshold of a new age. America was fast becoming, observed James Madison, "the workshop of liberty" in the world.

In keeping with the political aims of the Revolution the orators demonstrated a deep sense of a new virtuous nation being formed. As they espoused growth in commerce and manufacturing, continued union of thirteen contentious states, and delegation of more fiscal authority to a national legislature, they revealed a common republican ideology. In fact, writes the contemporary historian Gordon Wood in his brilliant treatise *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, most American religious and secular leaders extolled the qualities of a righteous and virtuous society. Given their understanding of biblical allegories, events surrounding the rise and fall of ancient republics, and contemporary situations both in Europe and in America, they cautioned against the evils of luxury, avarice, and pride.

In particular, the early Independence Day celebrants repeatedly warned the people against the danger of political corruption to the republic. The new government, they thought, depended entirely "upon the virtues of the people for its support." They believed that if political representatives and businessmen proved honest in politics and in the marketplace, America would remain free and independent. Otherwise, they argued, the new nation, like the ancient republics, would "sink into contempt and ruin."

Yet, how could the newly-created republic best protect herself against corruption and extravagance? Had not all the great republics, like Greece and Rome, contrary to their best intentions, given in to the temptations of luxury and greed? Besides, were there not throughout the years of the war and the early republic, social problems and signs of political and economic instability? Admittedly, explained Reverend James Campbell in his anniversary address before the Reformed Calvinist Church in Philadelphia, "There are clouds and storms in the political as well as the natural hemisphere." But, he contended, fully expressing the optimistic republican conviction of the day, "to weak and timid minds only are they big with terror." Most American leaders in the formative years of the new nation exhibited faith in education and in man's ability to learn from experience.

Assuming, then, that man is educable and that the manners of a free people depend greatly upon knowledge, the nation's early Independence Day orators proposed that learning be generously encouraged. In independent America, stressed Thomas Dawes in his keynote address at the Fourth of July celebration in Boston's historic Faneuil Hall in 1787, the "arts and sciences" should be "spread far and wide." On the same day in New Haven, Connecticut, the lawyer David Daggett, who later became prominent in the Federalist Party, also urged the legislature to support the spread of knowledge in order to "induce" the people "to think and act for themselves." America's Independence Day authors hoped that America would soon produce, in addition to more scientists and mechanics, her share of poets, critics, and historians.

Why was there this sense of urgency in fostering eloquence in criticism and poetry? Believing that sovereignty should reside in the people, American leaders were out to prove to themselves and to the world that free men could govern successfully. But the success of the experiment, they thought, clearly rested on the quality of education and on free and open dissemination of knowledge and criticism. "When I speak of a diffusion of knowledge," explained the Massachusetts lexicographer Noah Webster, (and he may very well have been speaking the sentiments of most of his educational colleagues), "I do not mean merely a knowledge of spelling books and the New Testament." People in a free republic, he continued, definitely need an "acquaintance with ethics and with the general principles of law, commerce, money, and government." Throughout the early years of the Republic, prominent speakers on politics and education argued that the whole society stood to profit by an investment in education. Free individuals, they believed, help shape and give meaning to institutions by making their choices within them. When people "have the means of knowledge, and time to deliberate," wrote James Madison, they "adopt right political sentiments" and minister to the needs of their fellowmen.

Having this high opinion of human capabilities, the Independence Day celebrants and essayists on education argued convincingly that a free community is impossible without education. They believed, as the young Connecticut jurist Simeon Baldwin contended in his 1788 anniversary address, that the degree of oppression in any society "will ever be in proportion to the knowledge and refinement of the people." And, he continued, because in America the people fill the branches of government, education should be made available to everyone. Where it is confined to a few people, wrote the Philadelphia statesman Benjamin Rush in his *Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools*, "we always find monarchy, aristocracy, or slavery." Consequently, education "is the rock" on which America must build her "political salvation."

For this reason, Thomas Jefferson, writing from Paris in the summer of 1786, urged his friend and former mentor George Wythe to join him in "a crusade against ignorance." The tax which will be paid to promote the education of the common people, he wrote, "is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings . . . and nobles who will rise among us if we leave the people in ignorance." What Jefferson and other political leaders proposed was an education that would enable individuals to develop their critical and moral faculties as fully as possible. Learning, for its sake alone, was not enough. Rather, they wanted to implant in the minds of young people the principles of virtue and liberty that would inspire them to act as independent human beings.

For the founding fathers, then, the most practical education is one which touches the individual directly and touches him deeply. In 1796 in his prize-winning essay *Remarks on Education*, Samuel Harrison Smith, a young newspaperman from Pennsylvania, provided a model sketch of the well-educated individual in the republic. "The citizen, enlightened," he wrote

> *will be a free man in its truest sense, too well informed to be misled, too virtuous to be corrupted. . . . He will know his rights, and he will understand the rights of others; discerning the connection of his interest with the preservation of these rights, he will as firmly support those of his fellowmen as his own. . . . Immutable in his character, inflexible in his honesty, he will feel the dignity of his nature and cheerfully obey the claims of duty.*

The Rugged Individualist

A dilemma in American life has been how to balance individual needs with the needs of society, how to reconcile the rights of the individual and those of the public. When is it advisable to subordinate individual wants to some larger public interest? When should individuals be protected against the state? In many respects twentieth-century America has become collectivized, fashioning society in such a way as to attend to individuals through corporate jobs, social security, and corporate pensions. Today, government regulation is considered necessary. But there can be too much corporate and social planning as far as the welfare of individuals is concerned. How do people prevent political or social meddling? Well-meaning legislation, explain some critics, makes it extremely difficult for many individuals who are part of a system to lead their own lives and attend to their own affairs.

For over a century and a half Americans have debated the social and economic effects of industrialization and urbanization on the lives of individuals. Some argue that there has been a willingness on the part of society to sacrifice human values to growth, material progress, and efficiency. As a consequence, people on their jobs and at home lead a fragmented existence, anything but a whole life. When the astute French aristocrat, Alexis de Tocqueville, visited America in 1831 he warned of the potential danger of an urban manufacturing elite on individual lives. "I am of opinion," he declared, "that the manufacturing aristocracy which is growing up ... first impoverishes and debases the men who serve it, and then abandons them to be supported by the charity of the public." More particularly, de Tocqueville expressed concern over the alienation of the workingman, the dehumanizing effects of his work upon him. "When a workman is unceasingly and exclusively engaged in the fabrication of one thing," he wrote, "he ultimately does his work with singular dexterity; but at the same time, he loses the general faculty of applying his mind to the direction of the work. He every day becomes more adroit and less industrious; so that it may be said of him," he continued, "that in proportion as the workman improves, the man is degraded. What can be expected of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins?... When a workman has spent a considerable portion of his existence in this manner, his thoughts are forever set upon the object of his daily toil;... in a word, he no longer belongs to himself, but to the calling which he has chosen."

By the 1830's the territory of the United States was nearly double what it had been at the time of the Revolution, and with the massive influx of immigrants from less-promising lands, the population had tripled. Population in such cities as New York and Boston had multiplied several times and was fast approaching a million and quarter-million respectively. As America became more nation-conscious and factory life spread throughout the Northeastern States, there appeared new spokesmen for the basic rights and needs of the individual.

Given the new directions in society, American Romantics like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Orestes Brownson saw the need for greater individuality. Writing in the aftermath of a successful Revolution and influenced by the deep sense of newness in America, they argued for more individual self-reliance in society. Placing the highest value on the individual, they cautioned him against the evils of crass materialism, of a too-structured or too-mechanized society which leaves little room for the unexpected, for spontaneity. Revolting against routine and the habitual paths of conduct, they encouraged individuals to imaginatively lead lives which make sense to them, to see with their own eyes, to feel with their own senses, and to come to know their own thoughts.

Perhaps the most inspirational model of the well-educated individualist in Jacksonian America was outlined by Emerson in his famous essay on "The American Scholar," which he presented to the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard in 1837. Seeing America on a new and unexplored course, Emerson argued that the coming "age of mechanics," accompanied by a sharp rise in urban population, would affect the availability of choices open to the individual as well as his capacity to make decisions. Significantly, he proceeded to tell his audience that the "man-thinker" is educated in three ways: by nature, by books, and by action.

"The first in time and the first in importance," he declared, is education by nature. The self-reliant person sharpens his awareness of the outside world by refining his senses of touch, vision, taste, hearing and smell. Second to nature in the education of individuals are books. Emerson pointed out that when properly used books "are the best of things." But when abused they are "among the worst." He advised his young listeners against giving too much authority to them. Books "are for nothing but to inspire," he asserted. What end, then, should schools—which are built on books—serve? Just as "there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man," schools "have their indispensable office—to teach elements. But," he continued, "they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create." Lastly, Emerson stressed the importance of action. As a resource it is equally essential in the education of the individualist as are books and nature. Without action the individual "is not yet man" and "thought can never ripen into truth."

America's increasing attraction to machinery and techniques of specialization also heightened Thoreau's concern over the twin dangers of the individual in the wastage of intellectual power and the dulling of senses. In the face of the nation's rapid rates of growth, he opted to live a life alone, in the woods, away from the bustle of civilization. Thoreau built himself a simple cabin on the shore of Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts, and lived a self-sufficient existence from 1845 to 1847. An individualist, he thought, inculcates the habit of knowing through his own senses, reflecting on his own experiences and others', understanding his own thoughts and opinions, and acting out his acquired wisdom and principles.

In American history the concept of "rugged individualism" is often associated with an individual's effort to succeed by his own initiative. It is commonly identified with the frontiersman—James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo—the lone individual moving west across the land. Pioneer individualism symbolizes acts of bravery, personal successes and disappointments. Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and John C. Fremont rank high as brave and enterprising "rugged individualists." But also rich in the American past is a broader definition of the concept in terms of what an individual might become were he able to act in accordance with his talents and feelings.

What is the meaning of "self?" Below are appropriate passages depicting America's long tradition of a quest for individual identity.

> *Be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought.*
>
> *Henry David Thoreau*, Walden (1854)

I am large,
I contain multitudes.
I exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware, I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

Walt Whitman, Song of Myself (1855)

. . . It is not the earth, it is not America who is so great,
It is I who am great or to be great, it is You up there, or any one,
It is to walk rapidly through civilization, governments, theories,
Through poems, pageants, shows, to form individuals.

Underneath all, individuals,
I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals,
The American compact is altogether with individuals. . . .

I am for those that have never been master'd,
For men and women whose tempers have never been master'd,
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never master.
I am for those who walk abreast with the whole earth,
Who inaugurate one to inaugurate all.

Walt Whitman, By Blue Ontario's Shore (1865)

> *Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose.*
>
> *D. H. Lawrence*, Studies in Classic American Literature (1923)

> *What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?*
>
> *Allen Ginsberg*, Howl (1955–56)

> *It is impossible for the average boy to grow up and use the remarkable capacities that are in every boy, unless the world is for him and makes sense.*
>
> *Paul Goodman*, Growing Up Absurd (1956)

> *Identity is a coherent sense of self. It depends upon the awareness that one's endeavors and one's life make sense, that they are meaningful in the context in which life is lived.*
>
> *Allen Wheelis*, The Quest for Identity (1958)

> *The real deprivation has not been in terms of material goods but in terms of a deadened mind, a loss of feeling, a life that excludes all new experience. This is the true nature of contemporary servitude.*
>
> *Charles Reich*, The Greening of America (1970)

Of great significance, too, in a study of individualism is the paradox in the American character, the American's desire of both wanting to belong and to be independent. This dualism, perhaps best explained in terms of "individualism" and "conformity," has been a popular subject in the writings of European travelers and journalists as well as native sages. In the process they have stressed the influence of the majority, of numbers, in the shaping of the American. Because in America "the interests of the many are to be preferred to those of the few," wrote de Tocqueville, public opinion encroaches upon independence of mind. Whereas authority of the king in Europe was purely physical, in America "authority of the majority" was both "physical and moral." What de Tocqueville defined as "tyranny of the majority," his contemporary, Harriet Martineau, described as the American's "worship of opinion."

James Fenimore Cooper, whose Leather-Stocking Tales glorified the simplicity of life in nature, in the forests, wrote in *The Sea Lions* that it "is every hour becoming less and less possible for an American to maintain his rights" against the will of the majority. A perceptive critic of society, Cooper warned that the "influence of numbers is increasing in force, and threatens consequences which may set at naught the well-devised schemes of the last generation for the security of the state, and the happiness" of the people. Writing half a century later, Lord James Bryce in *The American Commonwealth* elaborated on the American's submission to majority opinion. "This tendency to acquiescence," he argued, "this sense of the insignificance of individual effort," disinclines individuals to battle for their own opinions. For an individual ever to stand alone, he must have "some special spring of inward strength."

Though Americans have always been suspicious of too much regulation and fearful of too much conformity in society, post-World War II sociological studies by David Riesman, William Whyte and C. Wright Mills, among others, revealed the excessive conformist nature of the American. In *The Lonely Crowd* Riesman described urban upper-middle class Americans as other-directed types, unduly influenced by other peoples' tastes and values. The psychoanalyst Erich Fromm's description of the peer-oriented person as analogous to a handbag on a counter lucidly illustrates the conformist's reliance on others for his source of direction. "Like the handbag, one has to be in fashion on the personality market, and in order to be in fashion one has to know what kind of personality is most in demand. This knowledge," he explained in *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* "is transmitted in a general way throughout the whole process of education, from kindergarten to college, and implemented by the family."

Rejecting the well-worn paths of behavior, Americans in the 1960's and 70's reasserted the right of individuals to share in those decisions which determine the quality and direction of their lives. Youths, middle-aged and elderly people, black and white, men and women, gave new life to the idea of individual independence. In the tradition of American Romantics and early twentieth-century Pragmatists like Charles Saunders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, social critics in the sixties sought to come to grips with life, experience, process, and personal growth. The only test of "probable truth," William James had written, "is what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted." The attempt on the part of the individual to be a whole man alive has also been a central theme in contemporary novels by Norman Mailer, J. D. Salinger, Saul Bellow, Ralph Ellison, Bernard Malamud, and Truman Capote.

Recent American culture encourages individuals to replace what is routine and habitual with more personally rewarding experiences. "Everywhere," writes the literary critic Benjamin DeMott in *Surviving the 70's*, "the same themes sound: the will to possess one's experience rather than to be possessed by it, the longing to live one's own life rather than be lived by it, the drive for a more various selfhood than men have known before." People in all walks of life are attempting to live more creatively and imaginatively, voluntarily welcoming more vital experiences in their lives.

The Dream of Success

In the middle of his century Walt Whitman saw part of America busy at work. In *I Hear America Singing* he identified those workmen who seemingly enjoyed their work.

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be
blithe and strong.
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or
leaves off work.
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat,
the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench,
the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the
morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown.
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife
at work, or of the girl sewing or washing.
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party
of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Like Emerson and Thoreau, Whitman conceived man's dream and success in terms of personal growth and fulfillment. American Romantics repeatedly cautioned the young nation against becoming so enthralled by industrial progress and wealth as to measure success almost entirely in material or pecuniary terms. "I look on that man as happy," Emerson declared, "who, when there is a question of success, looks into his work for a reply, not into the market, not into opinion, not into patronage."

But as America waxed rich and strong, and the nation's work force increased in size, there evolved a myth-system which encouraged every individual to work hard and to expect economic success. Though it can readily be shown that materialism and greed are not unique or exclusive American traits, that other peoples in the world are materialistic, from the earliest colonial times Americans strongly linked success with the accumulation of things. Social and cultural historians of this century have generally agreed with William James's assertion that "the exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess SUCCESS" is America's "national disease."

Indeed, the American dream of success has affected many lives. Reminiscing about his mother, Naomi, the poet Allen Ginsberg argues the pointlessness of aspects of the American dream. In *Kaddish*, he records visions he has of her:

It leaps about me,. . . as I walk toward the Lower
East Side—where you walked 50 years ago, little
girl—from Russia, eating the first poisonous
tomatoes of America—frightened on the dock—
then struggling in the crowds of Orchard Street toward what?
—toward Newark—
toward candy store, first home-made sodas of the century,
hand-churned ice cream in back room on musty
brown floor boards—
Toward education, marriage, nervous breakdown, operation,
teaching school, and learning to be mad, in a dream—
*what is this life?**

What is the American dream? As romanticized in post-Civil War inspirational self-help literature it is the quest for economic success. America's success mythology helped shape individual lives and influence the direction of individual efforts.

The major success writer in America's post-bellum period was Horatio Alger. From the time of his first publication in 1868 of *Ragged Dick; or Street Life in New York with the Boot-Blacks* to his death in 1899 he was the most popular author in America. The Alger hero gave young people the formula for success. In an age of growing industrialization and material prosperity, the ragged boy could, by becoming more industrious, self-reliant, and frugal, prudently take advantage of the many opportunities afforded him and climb to the top of the economic ladder. In every Alger novel money was central to the plot.

As Kenneth S. Lynn points out in his brilliant work *The Dream of Success: A Study of the Modern American Imagination* virtually every success novel equated "the pursuit of money with the pursuit of happiness and of business success with spiritual grace." From the Civil War to the turn of the century, the literature of self-help dealt simultaneously with the acquisition of money and development of character. In America's competitive market system, the individual was encouraged to be aggressive and to produce as much as he could.

In addition to the Horatio Alger work-hard-and-be-successful stories, religion in America became more practical. Champion of the cult of religious practicality was the Baptist minister and philanthropist Russell Conwell. It is estimated that he delivered his famous sermon "Acres of Diamonds" several thousand times to over 13,000,000 people. Conwell asserted that economic success in society was the result of industry and virtue. The American dream, he argued, was within the reach of every person who heard him speak. "I know I am right that the men and women sitting here, who found it difficult perhaps to buy a ticket to this lecture or gathering to-night, have within their reach 'acres of diamonds,' opportunities to get largely wealthy." Conwell believed, as did many of his contemporaries, that to make money honestly was "to preach the gospel." Though a few rich people made their money dishonestly, he admitted, "ninety-eight out of one hundred of the rich men of America are honest."

Similarly, it was also not uncommon for successful businessmen and conservative academicians to perceive the economic struggle in America's competitive society as analogous to the struggle for survival in the animal world. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Charles Darwin's biological theories of evolution and natural selection as developed in *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* spread through such disciplines as history, anthropology, and sociology. Increasingly, social scientists became convinced that like the ongoing selection of fitter organisms in the animal kingdom there was a natural selection of fitter individuals in the social order.

The two most influential advocates of what became popularly known as Social Darwinism were Herbert Spencer in England and William Graham Sumner in the United States. In linking individual self-reliance and industry with the laws of nature, they both argued that in the struggle for survival, the fittest individuals would survive, and the race would thereby be improved. They both saw the poor as the "unfit" in society.

**From KADDISH AND OTHER POEMS by Allen Ginsberg. Copyright 1961 by Allen Ginsberg. Reprinted by permission of City Lights Books.*

“The whole effort of nature is to get rid of the unfit,” argued Spencer, “and make room for better. . . . If they are sufficiently complete to live they do live, and it is well they should live. If they are not sufficiently complete to live, they die, and it is best they should die.”

In stressing the virtue of competition, the idea of nature, hard work, and self-sufficiency, Social Darwinists sought to check the rising tide of government reformism in America. In his essay “The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over” the Yale professor, William Sumner, denounced the sentimental lectures of political reformers. “The sentimentalists,” he explained, “have been preaching for a century notions of rights and equality, of the dignity, wisdom, and power” of the people. These notions, he continued, “have filled the minds of ignorant men with impossible dreams.” The attempt to make the world over would surely lead to “the survival of the unfittest.”

What then, in the face of increasing poverty in America in the last third of the century was man to do? How was the individual expected to fend for himself in the fiercely competitive society? Sumner’s answer was simple. “The only two things which really tell on the welfare of man on earth are hard work and self-denial, and these tell most when they are brought to bear directly upon the effort to earn an honest living, to accumulate capital, and to bring up a family of children to be industrious and self-denying in their turn. I repeat that this is the way to work for the welfare of man on earth.”

But by the 1880’s and 1890’s Social Darwinism declined in importance and popularity. Social and political reformers like Henry George, Lester Ward, Jane Addams, Robert LaFollette, Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Croly, among others argued that unbridled industrial growth killed competition and led to the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Municipal and state reforms of the 1870’s, ’80’s, and ’90’s, and Progressive legislation in the early 1900’s were intended to increase and widen opportunities for individuals to pursue the American dream. The governments sought to safeguard individual rights of life and freedom of competition.

In the half-century following the first world war the quest for economic success continued. In the twenties technological advance made possible almost 100 percent increase in industrial output. New advertising and sales techniques as well as the creation of new products stimulated consumer demand. More and more women wore rouge and lipstick in public and, argued some critics, with the rise of material progress it became increasingly more difficult for young people to accept the conventional standards of their parents.

But for all the apparent material contentment, there arose in the late twenties and thirties severe difficulties in the economy. The foreclosure and collapse of thousands of farms and banks coupled with the breakdown of Wall Street and rising unemployment led to more extensive government regulation. By curtailing unfair business practices, passing laws against unsanitary working conditions and child labor, establishing price controls, and insuring the right of collective bargaining, New Deal legislators hoped to stabilize the economy and eventually restore it to pre-Depression days. By the early forties, the nation’s war-time economy got America out of the Depression.

Following the second world war the American dream of “making it” continued. Success was largely interpreted in terms of material possessions and accumulations. Disposable personal income in the United States more than doubled over two decades. It seemed that economic life in America was getting better all the time. A high percentage of families owned a TV set, a washing machine, a freezer, two cars, a color TV, a trailer or speedboat, and air conditioning.

For a few million rich Americans the dream of success was real. It has been estimated that in the 1960’s the top 1 percent of U.S. wealthholders

A municipal swimming pool in Astoria, Long Island, New York, near the Triborough Bridge.

owned roughly 25 percent or more of all personal property and financial assets. This wealth comes to one trillion dollars. The top 10 percent of the people in the country got close to 30 percent of the national income and owned 56 percent of the wealth. Other beneficiaries of the affluent society who were not included in the top stratum of wealth in America were successfully employed as lawyers, engineers, physicians, advertisers, and real estate brokers.

But in the past decade Americans have also become aware of the extent of economic deprivation and poverty in their own society. For a sizable segment of the population the American dream of success has been an unfulfilled or unrealized one. According to recent government studies millions of Americans either live in poverty or are on the edge of it. Writing eight years after the publication of his critical expose of *The Other America*, Michael Harrington observed that in spite of the war on poverty in the sixties there were almost as many "poor Americans" in 1970 as in the previous decade.

The Pursuit of Pleasure

I asked professors who teach the meaning of life
to tell me what is happiness.
And I went to famous executives who boss the work
of thousands of men.
They all shook their heads and gave me a smile
as though I was trying to fool with them.
And then one Sunday afternoon I wandered out
along the Desplaines river
And I saw a crowd of Hungarians under the trees
with their women and children and a keg
of beer and an accordion.

Carl Sandburg, Happiness (1916)

How do Americans pursue happiness? How do they pursue pleasure, enjoy their time away from work? Formulas to happiness and guides to pleasurable living have been available for a long time. Hundreds of books have been written on how to get more out of living. A car wash operator recently advertised that "Happiness is a Shiny Car." To some people, happiness is dancing to Greek music. To others it is being in vogue—wearing belled trousers, the right size cuffs, or the right kind of beauty aid. One estimate is that American men alone spend half a billion dollars a year on scents. To young people in the 1960's, happiness varied from being accepted in the right University to practicing free love and repudiating the straight world of adults. What perhaps has become a truism is the fact that people have different tastes and appetites, that they steer their courses differently and seek their happiness in different ways and in different experiences.

From the earliest years of the republic happiness has been a national goal, and an individual's pursuit of it a basic right. In late spring 1776 prominent Virginians drafted the Virginia Declaration of Rights, in which they declared that "all men are created equally free and independent, and have certain inherent natural rights, of which they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; among which are the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." A few weeks later, in the month of July, colonial representatives at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia acknowledged the "self-evident" truth that all men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." In little time this concept became central in American social and political thought. From the outset, however, it was not clear what Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, James Madison, and others who assumed a crucial role in making the pursuit of "happiness" a right of man, meant by it. And as Howard Mumford Jones points out in his work on *The Pursuit of Happiness* subsequent generations of Americans have taken man's right to pursue pleasures as an accepted truth, and if they have been unclear as to its meaning "they have on the whole been satisfied" to let it remain "in convenient ambiguity."

It was fairly common in eighteenth-centry America for religious and political leaders to conjoin piety and virtue in promoting individual and public happiness. In a sermon, which he delivered in 1742, the Connecticut pastor Solomon Williams informed his parishioners "that Happiness is invariably annexed to Godliness." The more "godly" and saintly "any person is," he argued, "the more Happy. The true pleasure of Mind at all times lies in religion." One of the earliest popular guides to living was Benjamin Franklin's list of moral strictures, which he regarded to be of "the utmost Importance to the Felicity of Life." Believing that living a virtuous life was an "art," Franklin drew up thirteen virtues, among which were temperance, frugality, industry, sincerity, moderation, cleanliness, and chastity, to assist individuals in their everyday experiences. "Be in general virtuous," he wrote confidently, "and you will be happy."

During the tense Stamp Act episode between England and her North

A campsite on the bank of the man-made Roosevelt Lake, Grand Coulee Dam National Recreation Area, Washington State.

American colonies in the mid-1760's, the Boston clergyman Andrew Eliot declared in one of his more eloquent sermons that "There is one course, which if it will not be a certain cure, will yet be a great relief in the most dangerous state we can be in; and that is the practice of piety and universal virtue. Virtue," he continued, "does in itself tend to promote public happiness. Frugality, temperance, industry will extricate us out of most difficulties that can arise; and if we are actuated by religion, God will be our God, our protector, and friend." In the same text, Eliot put forth one of the clearest pre-Revolutionary statements on the concept of public happiness:

> *People are generally capable of knowing when they are well used. Public happiness is easily felt. Men cannot but perceive when they enjoy their rights and privileges; when they sit at quiet under their own vines and fig trees, and there is none to make them afraid; when*

> *the laws of the land have their course, and justice is impartially administered; when no unreasonable burthens are laid upon them...*

During and following the Revolutionary War, American political theorists carefully considered which form of government would work best for the new republic. In his *Thoughts on Government*, John Adams urged his colleagues to consider first what is the end of government. "Upon this point," he wrote, "all speculative politicians will agree that the happiness of society is the end of government, as all divines and moral philosophers will agree that the happiness of the individual is the end of man." Thus, he inferred, from "this principle it will follow that the form of government which communicates ease, comfort, security, or, in one word, happiness, to the greatest number of persons, and in the greatest degree, is the best." Accordingly, Adams and many of his contemporaries stressed the need to study the effects of political and social institutions on individuals before assessing the effectiveness of any government.

As the founding fathers in the early years of the new nation set out to fashion society in such a way as to make it possible for everyone to pursue happiness, there were already apparent paradoxes in the American situation. Though the republic symbolized the dignity and worth of the individual, there was the obvious anomaly of America's dedication to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and America's support of the institution of slavery. Two years before the War for Independence, the Connecticut minister Levi Hart in his text *Liberty Described and Recommended* wrote: "Liberty is excellent, and to be desired on the one hand, so slavery or bondage is terrible and to be avoided on the other. These are justly esteemed the two extremes of happiness and misery in society." During the next century, millions of black and Indian Americans were forcibly suppressed.

Significantly, too, it is said that America with all her wealth is the only country where pleasure has consistently been a problem. Americans, as the argument goes, are in such a hurry and place such a high premium on material possessions that they seldom take the time to enjoy what they do. They seem to have the problem of having too much and moving too fast. "Americans," observed Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830's, are "restless in the midst of their prosperity." Indeed, he continued, "Their taste for physical gratifications must be regarded as the original source of that secret disquietude" which their actions betray "and of that inconstancy of which they daily afford fresh examples....Besides the good things that the American possesses," de Tocqueville added, "he every instant fancies a thousand others that death will prevent him from trying if he does not try them soon. This thought," he concluded, "fills him with anxiety, fear, and regret and keeps his mind in ceaseless trepidation, which leads him perpetually to change his plans and his abode."

In the early 1870's the Austrian Baron Graf von Hübner also characterized Americans as being uncommonly energetic and restless. He discovered in his travels that "in every sphere of human activity, superhuman efforts are made." Though "you have obtained, and are obtaining every day, enormous results," he declared,

> *it is at the cost of excessive labour, of a permanent tension of mind and an equally permanent drain of your physical strength. This excess of toil . . . seems to be the source of serious evils. It must produce exhaustion, lassitude, and premature old age; it deprives those who give themselves up to it first, of time, and then of the power of enjoying the result of their labours. It makes gain—money, the principal object in life; excludes gaiety; entails a sadness which is the natural consequence of over-fatigue; and destroys the family tie and home joy.*

But at the same time that new tensions, challenges, and anxieties surfaced in the newly-created and fast-expanding nation, Americans were encouraged to strive to be as happy as they could. As America became more industrialized and jobs more specialized, and new labor-saving machinery was introduced in factories, more and more people believed that a logical consequence from America's unexampled abundance would be increasing leisure time. And an increase in the amount of time away from work would enable people to pursue more pleasurable activities. Society responded by providing opportunities for individuals to engage in sports, participate in cultural functions, or seek out virtually any form of entertainment conceivable.

In the colonial period music concerts, stage productions, fox hunting, fishing, and horse racing were popular sources of entertainment and recreation. Following the Revolution there evolved new forms of amusement. As more and more people moved to the cities and worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week, they welcomed amusement of any kind. Theaters grew in size, and Americans attended minstrel shows, circuses, and visited recreational and amusement parks. At mid-century the ingenious promoter Phineas T. Barnum made the Swedish singer Jenny Lind an instantaneous success. She became the idol of millions of Americans. Thousands greeted her upon her arrival in the States in 1850. For nine months she toured the country and attracted thousands in cities like New York and Philadelphia. Americans bought their Jenny Lind hats and smoked their Jenny Lind cigars. P. T. Barnum's live

exhibitions and traveling circus inaugurated [illegible] tainment.

In the twentieth century America entered the [illegible] The rise of the professional sports of baseball, [illegible] led to the construction of more spacious stadiums [illegible] house the tens of thousands of new spectators. [illegible] basketball attracted public attention, and [illegible] century grew in popularity. Today, millions of [illegible] attend music concerts and symphonies, [illegible] nature-walks, and participate in a variety of [illegible] last thirty years there has been a substantial [illegible] people who golf, swim, hike, hunt, and [illegible]

In addition, new modes of transportation and [illegible] possible for many more individuals to pursue a [illegible] As a result of the automobile revolution in the [illegible] became less and less restricted to the rich. But the impact of the automobile on the American's way of life was surpassed by [illegible] television industry. If the automobile took people out of the home, [illegible] television kept many of them in. By the [illegible] sales of television [illegible] went up so that by the close of the decade most American families were inexpensively entertained in their homes. [illegible] amusements had come a long way from the golden age of [illegible] earlier.

Throughout American history, to secure [illegible] has been a basic individual right. Twentieth-century concerns over [illegible] for individuals, retirement planning, and life-adjustment have made popular the psychology of happiness. There has been increasing concern over the psychic well-being of individuals. Millions of Americans are [illegible] institutions, outpatients in psychiatric clinics, alcoholics, [illegible] Numerous brands of tranquilizers and stimulants are [illegible] with various mental states. To a large extent, the responsibility [illegible] assumed by ministers in attending to personal problems has been taken over by psychiatrists and social workers.

Everyone knows that contemporary America [illegible] Are not Americans spending more time pursuing happiness now than ever before? To the contrary, argue some critics. As far as leisure time is concerned it seems that with increasing technological advances [illegible] Americans have been spending proportionately more and more time going to, at, and returning from work than pursuing pleasure. In [illegible] *Anybody Happy* Norman M. Lobsenz identifies the [illegible] a person "who suffers from a deep psychological fear of relaxation. [illegible] equipped, often brilliantly," Lobsenz explains, [illegible] functions of life. But he is lost when work is over. So deep is his fear of leisure that he must remain in harness as long as possible." With careful use of economic data the Swedish economist Staffan B. Linder recently showed in his study of *The Harried Leisure Class* that consumption of pleasurable activities takes time just as does labor. "Such pleasures as a cup of coffee or a good stage play are not in fact pleasurable," he writes, "unless we can devote time to enjoying them" How many Americans bring home enough work from the office to occupy them through the evenings and weekends? How many are unable because of time or restlessness to *fully* enjoy that which for them is pleasurable? Perhaps, as Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in "An Apology For Idlers," "Extreme *busyness*" in contemporary America "is a symptom of deficient vitality."

The Fruits of Wisdom

In the early years of the new nation, America's political theorists often

The musical production "Camelot" staged in Broadway in 1961. King Arthur (Richard Burton) is flanked by Lancelot (Robert Goulet), Queen Guenevere (Julie Andrews) and his Court.

expressed the republican conviction that man has the capacity to effect reform in society to improve the human condition. Though familiar with the cyclical pattern of the rise and fall of states and with the erosion through corruption and luxury of powerful nations, increasingly they became convinced, as did the Boston physician John Warren at the close of the Revolutionary War, that America "may escape the rocks and quicksands" on which many countries "have been shipwrecked" by learning "wisdom by the misfortune of others," by tracing "the operation of those courses which have proved ruinous."

Before and during the period of colonization in the new world, America symbolized the hopes for liberty and security that caused many Europeans to leave their homelands. New England Puritans believed that God had chosen America as the preferred location to establish his kingdom on earth. In 1667, the Reverend Samuel Sewall's book, *Phaenomena Quaedam Apocalyptica*, described America as the "New Jerusalem." "America's name," he wrote, "is to be seen fairly recorded in the Scriptures, . . . that it stands fair for being made the seat of the Divine Metropolis." It seemed that America was assigned the responsibility of redeeming mankind. In 1709, before the Massachusetts General Assembly, the clergyman Cotton Mather delivered his sermon on *Theopolis Americana*. In condeming "Corruptions of the Market Place," Mather informed the assemblymen that "There are many arguments to persuade us, that our Glorious Lord, will have an Holy City in America." When the business of the city shall be run by the "Golden Rule, without corruption," he further explained, "the Street of the City" will be "pure Gold."

A year before America's Declaration of Independence, the Connecticut minister Ebenezer Baldwin prophesied that the American colonies would become "a great and mighty Empire, the largest the World ever saw, to be founded on such Principles of Liberty and Freedom, both civil and religious, as never before took place in the World; which shall be the principal Seat of that glorious Kingdom, which Christ shall erect upon Earth in the latter Days." In a great measure, declared Jacob Duché of Philadelphia in 1772, "My attachment to America . . . proceeds from the prospect of its growing greatness, to which every day seems more or less to contribute."

As Americans in the formative years of the new nation gradually and spontaneously crystallized novel political principles, succeeding generations hoped to fulfill the founding fathers' high republican ideals of freedom and justice for all peoples. As independent America of 1776 was transformed from a rural-agrarian to an industrial-urban society in 1876, and then to a technological-metropolitan culture in 1976, many individuals prophesied new visions and new beginnings. In the early 1960's Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., shared his dream with 200,000 civil rights workers in Washington, D.C.: "I have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream. I have a dream that one day in the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will sit down together at the table of Brotherhood." The belief that America would weather new and seemingly informidable challenges resurfaced in every generation of Americans. What each generation has had in common is a search for new directions.

In the period 1815 to 1945, from the time of the Treaty of Ghent which officially concluded the War of 1812 to the end of the Second World War, the United States evolved into the leading industrial nation-state in the world. From the Civil War to the end of the century, the value of manufacturing alone rose about ten times, and capital invested in industry rose approximately twenty times. In 1890, for the first time America had a larger urban than rural population. Population in the cities increased close to one hundred and fifty times in the nineteenth century. Indeed, as the successful entrepreneur Andrew Carnegie remarked in his book *Triumphant Democracy*, the "old nations of the earth" seemed "to creep on at a snail's pace" while America, with her abundant resources—especially her availability of a large and inexpensive labor supply—thundered "past with the rush of an express." Before the Civil War ended the United States was rated fourth industrially in the world. By the mid-1890's she was first.

But as the United States crossed the divide from a small rural-agricultural nation to a first-rate industrial power, there arose new tensions and problems of adjustment. For example, three years before the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, heralding a new industrial giant in the world, the young newspaperman Edward Bellamy deplored the new sufferings of children in factories. In his editorial "Overworked Children in Our Mills" he wrote: "Any day at noon you can see them in dingy flocks, hovering along the sidewalks between their boarding place and 'the yard'.... The mere sight of them," he argued, "so old and worn and miserable to look at, yet so young, is proof enough that a great wrong exists somewhere among us which is inflicting a vast amount of barbarity, a positive cruelty of monstrous proportions upon these children."

It seemed to social critics like Henry George that paradoxically, in the midst of America's unparalleled industrial achievement, some people were getting "an infinitely better and easier living," while others found "it hard to get a living at all." Writing in his famous treatise *Progress and Poverty*, George perceived that in the new industrial America "the tramp comes with the locomotive, and almshouses and prisons are as

ABOVE—Young children in every school across the United States receive free "shots" of the Salk vaccine to immunize them from poliomyelitis. RIGHT—Dr. Jonas E. Salk, who integrated the research of innumerable scientists to develop the anti-polio vaccine that bears his name.

much the marks of material progress, as are the costly dwellings, rich warehouses, and magnificent churches."

When America commemorated her one hundredth birthday in 1876, there was much to celebrate. But there was also much to mend. As American institutions grew richer and stronger, the American people lived through a period of sustained labor, racial, ethnic, and urban violence. Somewhat alarming to concerned citizens, too, was the fact that in the wake of a costly war to preserve the union America had entered a decade of amoral politics. Political cartoonists and bold writers in *Harper's Weekly* and *The New York Times*, among others, exposed corrupt and greedy leaders at all levels of government. William Marcy Tweed and his ring alone had taken the New York taxpayers for millions of dollars. Thus, as millions of Americans on July 4, 1876, celebrated America's heritage and accomplishments, new immigrants, ghetto dwellers, black people, American Indians, political and social reformers were critical of aspects of industrial America. As they began Century II, perhaps some of them echoed Benjamin Franklin's wish that he shared with his friend Joseph Priestley in 1780: "that Men would cease to be wolves to one another, and that human Beings would at length learn what they now improperly call Humanity." Like the Revolutionaries of 1776, many Americans assessing America's material achievements a century later believed that the significance of their industrial-democratic experiment belonged much more to the future than to the present.

Writers on American culture tell us that Bicentennial America is the first society to experience the future. The United States has left the industrial period and is entering, in the words of the political scientist, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "a novel metamorphic, phase in human history." Some people refer to it as the "age of technology" or "technetronic age." Notwithstanding the label we put on it, it suggests a society shaped largely by the impact of electronics and new forms of technology. The American in his new setting has been described as the archetypal "New World man." In a very real sense industrial societies in the world are learning what is in store for them by observing what happens in the United States of America. Observing her progress in science and medicine, her rendezvous in space with her new planetary ally, her dealings with young people, and her experimentation with air conditioning and electronic devices.

Not unlike the earlier shift in the nineteenth century, from an agricultural-rural society to an industrial-urban setting, this new crossing to a technological-metropolitan society has been profoundly altering American institutions, altering the spectrum of choices available to the individual. In a world in which two-thirds of its population is still living in

poverty or scarcity, America's Gross National Product since the end of World War II has more than quadrupled. Some estimates project the GNP to climb over a thousand billion dollars in the 1980's.

Indeed, Bicentennial America is intensely scientific and technical in orientation. In the last thirty years most scientific and technical discoveries originated in the United States. She dominates the world in the control and use of computers. It is an age of reliance on experts, an age of instantaneous international communication, one in which the people are experiencing a revolution in time and space relationships. Perhaps the most radical development has been the change in the nature of the labor force. It has been estimated that less than half of the work force is engaged in primary production. Human energies formerly channelled into the production of goods are spent in service-oriented jobs and careers.

But alongside the opulence in America are signs of distress. Given the social and economic hardships endured by millions of Americans, the scandalous increase in violence and crime, this is hardly the season to stress overfulfillment in the American past. Since President John F. Kennedy's dream of Camelot, Americans have witnessed race and ghetto riots, youth unrest, assassinations of Kennedys and Kings, political violence in Chicago in 1968, airplane hijackings, Attica, and disgrace in and around the White House.

Has America's confidence in herself been shaken? In searching for new and fresh directions Americans seek to recapture the old faith in progress. Believing that society's technological power is controllable, they assess America's situation as rich in future possibilities. As they carve out desirable future alternatives and models for a freer and more humane society, they are in the rich tradition of early Independence Day celebrants who argued that Americans should always embrace "what ought to be, instead of clinging to what is."

Lecturing before the Connecticut General Assembly in May 1762, the clergyman Joseph Bellamy asserted that, if the colony's "external advantages were improved as a virtuous people might improve them, we might be very happy. And it is the duty of all, especially of those in places of public trust, to do all in their power to promote a universal reformation." Bellamy envisioned a society in which "malice and envy" would be gone, "good will" would reign, and there would be few poor people. But, he cautioned, in spite of "the goodness of our land, and all our advantages. . ., luxury, idleness, debauchery, dishonesty, and multiplied law-suits may bring us to poverty." Thus, he concluded, the need for "universal reformation" in society.

In his Fourth of July oration in 1787, the New York statesman Robert Livingston declared that "A precious deposit is given into our keeping," that Americans hold in their hands "the fate of future generations." Along their two-hundred-year journey Americans sought to immortalize the finest in their past. As Americans inaugurate Century III, they too have a "precious deposit" in their keeping and hold in their hands "the fate of future generations."

Suggestions for Further Reading

ND/B/C/M/AUC **Rowland Berthoff,** *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971). A thorough synthesis of the social history of the American people. Especially useful is Professor Berthoff's discussion of the importance of "individuals" in the years 1785 to 1875.

M **John G. Cawelti,** *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965). The author shows how Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horatio Alger, John Dewey, and Dale Carnegie have nurtured the self-made man concept and how they have differed greatly in their definition of success.

Lawrence Chenoweth, *The American Dream of Success: The Search for the Self in the Twentieth Century* (North Scituate, Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1974). A careful study of the relationship of the success ethic to American popular institutions and practices in the years 1917 to 1970.

B/C/M/AUC **Richard Hofstadter,** *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York. Random House, Inc. 1962). A provocative study of America's ideological origins and the increasing unpopularity of intellect in American religion, politics, and education.

B/C **Richard H. Huber,** *The American Idea of Success* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1971). By focusing on the experiences and ideas of leading proponents of the ideology of success, the author comments on those characteristics which he regards as dominant in the formation of the success idea.

ND **Howard Mumford Jones,** *The Pursuit of Happiness* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1953). An extensive examination of the origin and development of one of the most popular phrases in American history.

Kenneth S. Lynn, *The Dream of Success: A Study of the Modern American Imagination* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955). An incisive analysis of the impact of the success myth on the writings of five novelists—Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, David Graham Phillips, Frank Norris, and Robert Herrick. In particular, Lynn's work shows the manner in which the authors responded to the success myth in their own lives.

Vernon Louis Parrington, Jr., *American Dreams: A Study of American Utopias* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 2nd edition, 1964). A sweeping analysis of American utopic writings from the earliest colonial days to 1945. The work clearly reveals the American's search for new directions and his faith in man's ability to improve the human condition.

Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973). A probing analysis of American dreams, culture, and social thought in the 1920's and 1930's. **B/C/ND**

Richard Weiss, *The American Myth of Success: From Horatio Alger to Norman Vicent Peale* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969). **Professor Weiss** shows how American ideas and attitudes regarding success—ranging from a desire never to surrender individualism to making-it in the material and psychological sense—have changed in the last 100 years.

Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954). This work examines various strands of thought reflected in the success tracts of the nineteenth century.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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